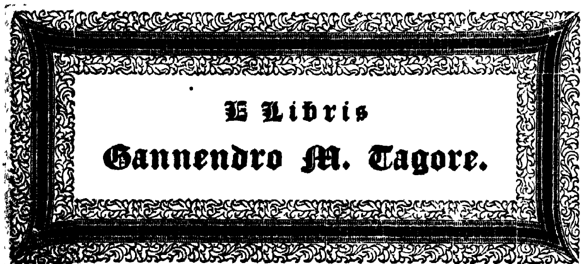


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SERMONS

ON

RETIREMENT, SELF-DENIAL, THE RESURRECTION,

AND ON THE

DIVINITY AND OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

PARTICULARLY ADAPTED FOR CHRISTIAN CONSIDERATION DURING THE SEASONS OF

LENT, EASTER, AND WHITSUNTIDE.

SELECTED FROM

THE WORKS OF THE MOST EMINENT ENGLISH DIVINES OF THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES.

IN THREE VOLS.

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

EACH successive age, in the unfolding of the Christian dispensation, has its peculiar character—a character not only adapted to the present time and circumstances, but also preparatory to what is designed to follow. The simple earnestness and sincerity of the first centuries were the human means employed, as fittest and most natural, to establish the faith of Christ among mankind, immediately upon its promulgation. The homage and protection which it obtained from Constantine, rather chilled than promoted its reception in some individual minds; but they had the effect of rendering it acceptable to whole classes of men, whose accession, not otherwise to be obtained, was necessary in order to secure those further objects designed by Providence to be accomplished by it in the world. Even the dreary period which presently

succeeded, was not without its peculiar utility. The ignorance, superstition, and ecclesiastical tyranny, which, in various proportions, mark every period of its protracted course, were perhaps no less indispensable preparatives to the better times which afterwards appeared, than the mingled storms and deadness of winter to the evolution of the future spring. When these had done their destined work, a spirit arose, different indeed from the fervour of the primitive age, but better calculated to work its regenerative progress through the changed elements of society. With equal fortitude to endure, it united a more practised skill to defend; a more active and intelligent industry in ascertaining and setting forth the grounds and designs of Christianity. It had a learned head, and a bold hand, as well as an intrepid and an honest heart. From the birth of the Reformation, a succession of men began to appear in the churches, since called Protestant—above all, in our own—who, distinguishing themselves above their brethren by genius and high attainments, erected, in the theological writings of England, the noblest literary monument, which we owe to the labours of any single profession.

The period of our Jewels and Hookers, of our Taylors and Barrows, passed away in its turn, but did not leave the field without useful labourers. The very declension in English theology, which followed upon the revolution of 1688, was the

occasion of adding a new and brilliant feature to our church literature. The dry ethical style which then came in fashion, led to the cultivation of biblical criticism and the evidences of religion. In the midst of a marked decline as to profound views of doctrine and energy of thought and language, we find great industry of research employed in determining and fortifying the external defences of the faith. Could clear outward proof and unanswerable argument, addressed to the intellect, convince and persuade mankind, infidelity, and every shape of irreligion, had long since disappeared from among us. Whatever light history and philology could afford, was called forth. Manuscripts, and ancient versions, collected from every part of the civilized world, were examined and compared with a laborious minuteness, which seems to have left but inconsiderable gleanings for the future enquirer. The evidences furnished by prophecy—by miracles—by the character of the first Christian teachers—by the wonderful reception of the gospel in the world, and the infusion of its spirit into all the elements of society, in spite of the most determined and cruel opposition—by the benefits which it has unquestionably conferred upon the human race,—all this was faithfully and ably exhibited. The successive rise of new discoveries, which the enemies of the gospel are ever on the watch to seize upon,

and on some pretext favourable to the weakness, the pride, or the wickedness of human nature, to wrest to their own purposes, has invariably added to the mass of external evidences. Scarcely one of the many travellers who in an age of growing enterprise visit those spots which the Bible has familiarized, while it hallowed them, to the imagination, whether a man of piety or not, returns home without bringing some confirmation of the local accuracy of its narratives, or of the infallibility of its prophetic denunciations. The same judgment and the same sagacity, employed upon a sufficient accumulation of facts, appear alone wanted, in order equally to silence the presumption of the unbeliever and the fears of the timid Christian, excited by the recent progress of geology. In proportion as this interesting science becomes thoroughly cultivated, and fixed on the secure basis of truth, we have every reason to believe it will take an important place among the natural evidences for the divine origin of Scripture. Nor ought we in this review to pass over unacknowledged the light, however dim and uncertain it at present appears, which seems destined to be cast over some obscure historical portions of the Sacred Records, by the judicious application of the newly discovered key to the monumental literature of Egypt—a country so intimately connected with the ancient state of that favoured

race, "to whom pertained the adoption, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises."

From all these regions have weapons been collected for the warfare of Truth—weapons of such various use and consummate temper, that upon scarcely a spot of what once might seem fair ground for controversy, can the opponent of the gospel now venture without certain defeat. Yet no one of all these is 'the sword of the Spirit.' Learning and skill in languages and science are invaluable for silencing an adversary, or for the vindication of insulted Truth; but not by them is 'the evil heart of unbelief' corrected, or the sinner arrested and made sensible of his guilt and danger, or the desolate and despairing cheered and comforted. Woe to erring and suffering mankind, if so it were! For who 'then should be saved?' Thoroughly to investigate and systematize the external proofs of revelation, in any one of these departments, is an achievement for no common mind; to become well acquainted with the whole, were the labour of a life, with every advantage of education, leisure, and tranquillity. If then there were no other means of arriving at 'belief unto righteousness,' and of consoling the conscience and fortifying the heart with unquestionable testimony, where would be the religious hopes of the great mass of men in every age? What were become of

the sacred boast of the Redeemer, that the gospel is brought home through him to the ears and bosoms of *the poor?* Were they to be reached by no more direct method, a prodigious majority of mankind must ever remain without saving knowledge or a clear faith. All our schemes for communicating information to the laborious classes must fail us in this most essential particular. For, allowing the utmost benefits to result from every conceivable help to mental acquisition, which the most sanguine can anticipate, still must the leisure for such extensive studies be wanting: this is a blessing which no improvement has brought, or can bring, within the reach of the many. On the contrary, the further nations advance in civilization the heavier and more incessant must be the toil, which their own wants and the wants of society at large impose upon those classes whose lot is physical labour; and so long as the instruction given them is directed to those departments of knowledge which properly belong to the few, upon whom is laid the responsibility of great intellectual acquirements, with facilities for their exercise, rather than to those divine and practical subjects in which all men have a common and an equal interest—so long will it but serve to show them, and in the least favourable point of view, the naked extent of their disadvantages.

What, then, is that universal and convincing

kind of evidence? Whither shall *he* look for assurance that his religion is divine, to whom the very characters in which the prophets and apostles wrote are unknown or devoid of significance? Is he, the willing and the meek, the desiring and the pure-hearted, left without guide or security amid the "howling waste" of unsettled opinion, because he knows not how learnedly to estimate letters and syllables—to trace the construction of the canon—to scrutinize dates and weigh testimony—to extract from opposite masses of fact the balance of conflicting probability? No—we may be told; but for the satisfaction of all such there are the decisions of authority. They have their teachers, their authentic formularies, the venerable voice of the church: 'let them hear them.' All this, we reply, is well; and heartily is it to be wished that men were more disposed to submit to these, in matters wherein they are sufficient and paramount. But something more is wanted: it is not upon any thing external, that the child of God is taught in his word to place an ultimate reliance. He is taught to expect an inward witness—an evidence, 'written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.' He is ignorant of controversy and chronology, of commentators and Fathers, of manuscripts and translations: but he can read his own heart; and, as in

an open book, meditate on the characters of his life. If he find within himself a capability of virtue, a pregnant seed of goodness, which, he is assured, belongs not essentially to the fallen and corrupt nature whereof he partakes, he infers that he has passed through that *second birth*, 'which is not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' If he has been delivered from his own false and evil will, and brought into an inward harmony with the will and purposes of God,—if the divine law is his delight, the divine promises his hope and stay,—if a conscious peace and joy irradiate his soul, manifestly different from and superior to the satisfactions of sense, the charms of the imagination, and the triumphs of the intellect;—if the rich fruitage of moral virtue—faith, love, gentleness, meekness, patience, adorn his character and gladden his contemplations;—if the principles of the gospel have wrought all this within him, how shall he not conclude that those principles are from heaven, and accompanied in their workings by a heaven-descended energy? To sneer at a doctrine clearly revealed in so many places of holy writ, and everywhere implied,—a doctrine attested by the universal experience of pious men, not even excepting heathen philosophers, and which indeed results from the fact that 'God is a Spirit,' in connexion with the correlative fact that we ourselves have

likewise a spiritual principle within us;—to sneer at such a doctrine is easy, but it shows equally the ignorance and presumption of unthinking minds. Granted—the doctrine is mysterious: so, it professes to be. So it necessarily must be; for it carries us beyond the world of sense, to a region where all things are 'spiritually discerned.' But in this respect it is not singular. The whole body of revealed doctrine is expressly proposed to us as 'the wisdom of God in a mystery.' Herein too it is in harmony with our minds, and with nature. The natural movements of our own souls—the sources of the human will, deep beyond the lowest line of consciousness—are involved in equal obscurity; nor are the essential elements of matter itself, and the laws upon which physical science depends, exempt from the like objection.

To distinguish between the steady light of Truth shining from its central sphere, and the glare of those earth-born exhalations which mock it with a specious resemblance, is an indispensable exercise of the judgment. It were an insufficient excuse for rejecting the doctrine of the divine influence of the Holy Spirit, that upon this subject weak men have fallen into manifold and dangerous delusions, while designing men have taken a fraudulent advantage of it. From a very early period of the Christian dispensation down to the present day,

the most melancholy page in the history of religion is that which, in every intervening age, is defaced by the fanatical extravagancies of pretenders to extraordinary spiritual gifts. Perhaps no country has been more fertile in these delusions, than our own. This unenviable distinction we owe, in a great degree, to the injurious impulse so often given to religious feeling by political excitement. Not confined to a few individuals of a warm fancy or a melancholy temperament, these pretences have been adopted as the peculiar, and often uncharitable distinctions of sects and parties. They were among the most powerful of the instruments employed, in a former age, to subvert the altar and the throne; and we have before our eyes lamentable proofs that, whether ready or not, as in the seventeenth century, to ally themselves with the enemies of social order, liberty, and peace, the same fanatical errors and presumptuous delusions continue to be cherished.

Nevertheless, the doctrine of a blessed influence derived to the Christian from above, remains in reality unvitiated by the folly and wickedness of those enthusiasts, whose excesses have made the subject distasteful to minds of a sober but not very reflective cast. Such abuses are but the vapours raised by the ascending sun of Truth—the denser and more offensive, indeed, in proportion to the brightness of the luminary, and to the earthy

grossness of the atmosphere through which his rays have to struggle: they are the shadow, which, *till all be made light*, we must be content to find following the substance. We cannot be too careful to avoid mistaking the noxious counterfeit for the life-imparting original; but it is doing both God and ourselves 'grievous wrong,' to take the obliquities and distortions of the former, as a reason for calling in question the existence of the latter. Those bold writers, those intellects of thorough English vigour and manliness, who have found meet exercise for their great strength in the exposure of profane and groundless claims to unusual endowments of the Spirit, clearly observed this distinction. The writings of Butler and Swift and Warburton, cannot shake, nor were designed to shake, the basis on which the Scriptural doctrine rests.

It has been already intimated, that for persons of little learning and perhaps less leisure, the simplest and most accessible evidence regarding the divine origin of Christianity, and the security of their faith and hope, is to be found in the living testimony of that Holy Spirit which cannot lie. But then—how shall they test the test itself? Where is the rule, by which the plain Christian may direct his course, between the unscriptural rejection of the doctrine by the Socinian and Deist, and those pretences to a peculiar inspiration,

which in every age have found favour with the many who mistake extravagance for fervour, a natural excitability of temperament for the impulses of a divine immission upon the soul? This is an enquiry equally important as it regards the welfare of society, and the peace of mind of the individual.

The rule to be suggested, then, is that supplied by the apostle; and, indeed, laid down by a yet higher authority. Let the 'Spirit' be judged by its 'fruits:' look to *the practical results.* Notwithstanding every corruption and abuse to which Christianity has been exposed,—notwithstanding those crimes (really the issue of errors it seeks to remove, and evil passions it strives to correct) which have been perpetrated under its venerable name—we yet appeal to the public benefits conferred by it upon mankind, as evincing a vital power of truth and goodness, inherent and inseparable from its doctrines. The meliorating effects of the gospel upon the condition of the world, are matters of unquestionable history. We are often told—and with truth—of its having put an end throughout most civilized nations, to the cruel and debasing practices of idolatry,—of its having sanctified and blessed the intercourse of domestic life, by abolishing polygamy, and contracting the facilities of divorce. We are directed to the comparative purity of morals,

both public and private, in consequence of its promulgation; we are reminded of the abolition of slavery and vassalage through its means. We have pointed out to us, as among the results of this precious boon, the gradual growth and mature development of public liberty, with all the improvements and blessings attendant thereon; including that grand and benignant work of Providence the evolition of the modern European states—each a separate sphere of light and improvement, and in their union a constellation shedding 'sweet influences' upon humanity—from the baleful and portentous orb which, under the form of the Roman empire, so long ruled the destinies of man.

These are, beyond question, among the blessings which a glance over the page of history discovers to us, as among the benefits resulting from the promulgation of the gospel: but in what manner, by what agency, resulting? Too many writers who are eloquent upon these points, would seem to leave it to be inferred, that all these advantages, with many others that accompany them, have proceeded from Christianity, merely as a system of moral truth, cast unaided into the world, to be rejected or accepted by men at pleasure. Had such been the case, not the divine revelation, or the miraculous announcement of the Gospel, could have saved it from neglect, if from oblivion. Man has by nature little abstract regard for moral truth,

or for its Author. We believe that the efficiency of the gospel, as a means of the happiness and improvement of mankind, depends far less upon the existence of its historical records, in their literal integrity, or even upon the undoubted conservation of the body of its essential doctrines, in a formal creed —though this too be of very high importance—than upon the fulfilment of the promise, 'I will send unto you the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, who shall abide with you for ever.' Preserved less by human esteem, than by the divine care, the truths of religion are made living and fruitful powers in the mind, only by the constant aid of the Holy Ghost; opening the hearts of men for their reception, removing impediments, and carrying on the designs thus suggested and facilitated, to completion.

But we have here, perhaps, a field of observation too wide for ordinary minds. Let then the Christian look, for a test of the actual operation of the Spirit, into his own heart and life. If he has been enabled to discern the light of truth, where the mere man of nature sees no glimmerings of it,—to embrace and appropriate those pregnant ideas, wherein is embodied the highest knowledge, which the man of the world deems wholly visionary,—if this has been vouchsafed to him, can he refuse to recognise in it the influence of that enlightening guide to 'all Truth?' But, further: this knowledge, unless wilfully thrust aside and

rejected, soon displays itself as a fruitful and productive principle. He has acquired a distaste for sin—an aversion for frivolous and unworthy pursuits; holiness has become precious to him—virtue alone fair: her dictates are now easy, her paths are found to be the ways of peace. In the midst of an evil world, he is adopted into the family of heaven: he loves goodness, and glories in it, and continually exercises himself in it; and desires more and more 'to approve things excellent,' and to become 'perfect even as God is perfect' in righteousness. Let the heart of that man in whom all this experience is realized, be at rest. The faith which is productive of such dispositions and such conduct, cannot but be sound, and kept alive continually by the indwelling of a Spirit, superior, not only to all that is in humanity, but to religion itself, considered merely as a system of principles and rules. In this dispersion of his natural darkness, and in this strength, not his own, whereby his natural frailty has been superseded, he contemplates an evidence of the present power of God accompanying his revelation, sufficiently clear to enable him to dispense with all that the labours of critics and commentators have brought together, for the purpose of building up from without, in the understanding, those convictions which can never prove effectual but in fol-

lowing the contrary process—by beginning in the will and the conscience.

The criterion at which we have arrived, we deem a sufficient, and the only safe one:—safe for all, it is also sufficient for the greater number of Christians. We do not mean, that in pointing to such results we point to the fact itself; but that their existence appears a sufficient demonstration of the fact. The actual commerce of the pious soul with its Maker—the inward witness—that intimate union, which justifies us in speaking of its higher acts and movements, as originating indifferently either in itself or in the Holy Spirit—this mysterious intercourse escapes the observation, and even the consciousness of the mind, while in operation: it is to be inferred from its consequences. This method, we say, is sufficient for the greater part of Christians; for those deeper and more immediate convictions refer to a state of spiritual insight and enjoyment attainable by few, and on the supposed experiences of which but few may with safety rely.

The doctrine of the influence of divine grace upon the soul,—preparing the will to receive the impression of the truth, accompanying and enforcing it,—leading it, through sanctification, to the fruition of a 'peace surpassing understanding'—is the constant doctrine of Scripture. That it was

likewise the constant subject of discourses from the pulpit, from the Reformation to the close of the seventeenth century, includes the secret of the extraordinary improvement in the moral condition of the people within that interval. It is the common, the universal theme of our old divines. Great and lasting was the injury inflicted by the political and religious fanaticism of the times of Charles I. and the Commonwealth. When the vast tide of enthusiasm had passed over, the whole nation seemed abandoned to indifference. The preacher was afraid of declaring the whole truth, lest he should lay himself open to the charge of sectarianism; while congregations were ashamed to receive or acknowledge those doctrines, the pernicious abuse of which had rendered them odious. Hence an unexampled meagerness characterised the style of our divines during the greater part of the last century. They talked much of gathering in the ripe fruits; but they hardly planted or watered. Doctrine was sunk in precept, and the religion of life was confounded with pagan ethics. The study of theology was confined to a small minority of the clergy—a number just sufficient to keep the flame from sinking, but not to feed and diffuse it in nourishing warmth. Hence, from the well-known and unvarying law, that extremes beget extremes, arose a powerful party, whose error is, not the intro-

duction of any new dogmas, but an intemperate zeal in enforcing the peculiar, and then neglected tenets of Christianity.

The discourses comprised in the present volume bear testimony, notwithstanding, to the harmony of our best theologians, in one important respect, down to a recent date. They have been selected from writers of various periods, but each distinguished by his piety and abilities, with the design of conveying to the reader a just, if not complete notion of every point connected with the profoundly interesting doctrine to which they relate. Taking them in their order, beginning with the historical and prophetic considerations relative to the manifestation of the Holy Ghost, on the day of Pentecost, the personal being and peculiar agency of the Spirit, the reader will be conducted to the consideration of his gifts, and their effects upon the soul of the faithful recipient; and thence to a view of the blessed assurances and abiding comforts of those in whom he finds a welcome abode—a temple which is one with its Divine Inhabitant.

The Editor indulges a hope that this republication, though it might not have proved sufficient to rouse the public mind, in a period of torpor such as that which has been adverted to, may yet, by the divine blessing, have no inconsiderable share in helping forward the growing demonstrations that we live in happier times That some revival of the warmth,

if not a return to the learning and depth of thought, of our forefathers, has taken place, is now universally felt and acknowledged. The consequence is visible in the reviving power of religion upon the minds of the people, and in the increased veneration in which the church is held, in spite of the open hostility of some, and the lukewarmness of others who should stand forward among the first in the ranks of her champions. May an enlarged charity, as well as an extended acquaintance with gospel truth be the result; and while those who have so long taunted us with frigidity and worldliness are forced to acknowledge among us the tokens of a fervent as well as sound piety, may they also, on their part, learn greater mildness and tolerance. This will, at least, be the case with all those who have received in sincerity that Holy Spirit, of which faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and love towards the brethren are the inseparable fruits.

R. C.

April 24, 1835.

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SERMON I.

ON THE COMING OF THE HOLY GHOST.

BY ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON.

JOHN TILLOTSON was born in 1630. He was elevated to the Archiepiscopal see of Canterbury in 1691; and died, 1694.

SERMON I.

JOHN, XVI. 7, 8.

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

THESE words are part of our Saviour's last sermon, which he made to his disciples a little before he left the world: and this sermon is recorded only by this evangelist, who hath set it down at large in the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of his Gospel. The main scope of it is, first to persuade them to the obedience and practice of that holy doctrine, which he had delivered to them while he was with them; and then, because their hearts were full of sorrow at the thoughts of his departure from them, knowing that for his sake they should be ill-treated by the world, he arms them against those discouragements; he promiseth, not long after his departure from them to send down his Holy Spirit upon them in miraculous powers and gifts, as a testimony to the world of the truth of his doctrine, and a clear con-

viction that he came from God: 'But when the Comforter' (or rather the Advocate) 'is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of me. And ye shall also bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.'[1] The testimony which the Holy Spirit should give to them, should give credit and strength to their testimony.

And this consideration he makes use of to comfort them under the sad thoughts of his departure, because his absence would be abundantly recompensed to them, by the coming of the Holy Ghost, which could not be till he had left the world; because this Comforter or Advocate was to be sent in his name, to come upon his account, and in his stead, to supply his absence. So that though they were greatly troubled at the thoughts of his departure, there was no cause for it, when all things were considered; for, in truth, it was for their advantage that he should depart from them: 'But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.'[2]

From which words I shall consider these two things:—

First, the necessity of Christ's leaving the world, in order to the coming of the Holy Ghost: 'If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.'

Secondly, the happy consequence and effect of

[1] John, xv. 26. [2] Ibid. xvi. 6—8.

the coming of the Holy Ghost: 'And when he is come, he shall reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.'

I shall, as briefly as I can, explain both these.

I. First, the necessity of Christ's leaving the world, in order to the coming of the Holy Ghost: 'Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.' That it is the Holy Ghost which is here spoken of, and that as a person, and not as a quality, or power, or virtue, is plain from our Saviour's discourse all along this sermon, in which he is spoken of under the notion of a person, and that in as plain and express terms, as Christ himself is. As the Father 'sent Christ,' so is he said 'to send the Holy Ghost;' as Christ is said 'to depart,' so the Holy Ghost is said, 'to come;' as Christ is called 'an advocate,' so the Holy Ghost is said to be 'another advocate;' Christ our advocate to plead our cause with God, he Christ's advocate to plead his cause with the world. 'And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.' And who is that? 'Even the Spirit of Truth.'[1] And chap. xv. 26. 'But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth.' And in the verse immediately after the text, 'Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come.' But expressly, chap. xiv. 26, he is called 'the Holy Ghost:' 'But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things.'

[1] John, xiv. 16, 17.

All the difficulty is concerning the word παράκλητος, which our translation renders 'the Comforter.' It is true, indeed, that the verb παρὰκαλεῖν is of a very large and unlimited signification; it sometimes signifies to comfort, very frequently to preach, teach, and exhort, and sometimes to plead as an advocate the cause of another. And this seems to be the proper notion of the word παράκλητος in this place, the advocate or patron of a cause, one that pleads for the party accused. And in this sense, and no other, Christ is called our παράκλητος, or 'advocate with the Father.' 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.'[1] And as Christ is 'our advocate with the Father' in heaven; so the Spirit is Christ's advocate here on earth, and pleads his cause with the world. And it is very observable, that this very word Paraclete, though it be not an Hebrew, but a Greek word, is frequently used both by the Chaldee paraphrast and other Jewish writers, in this sense of an advocate. And that this notion of the word agrees best with this place I shall clearly show, when I come to the second head of my discourse; namely, to show the happy consequence and effect of the coming of the Holy Ghost, viz. the convincing of the world how injuriously they had dealt with Christ, and the clear vindication of his innocency, which is the proper office and work of an advocate.

Having thus fixed the notion of the word παράκλητος in this place, we will now enquire what necessity or expediency there was, that Christ should leave the world, in order to the coming of

[1] 1 John, ii. 1.

the Holy Ghost: 'It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the advocate will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.'

And of this I shall give an account in these two particulars:—

1. From the method of the divine dispensation, in the redemption and salvation of man by Jesus Christ.

2. From the rational suitableness and congruity of this dispensation.

1. From the method of the divine dispensation, in the redemption and salvation of man by Jesus Christ. Thus the Scripture tells us, that God in his infinite wisdom had designed and ordered things, that the Son of God should come into the world, and live in a mean and abject condition; that he should be 'despised and rejected of men,' persecuted and put to death; and that as a reward of all this submission and suffering, he should be raised again from the dead, taken up into heaven, and placed 'on the right hand of the Majesty on high;' and that in the triumph of his ascension, he should 'lead captive' death and hell, and all the powers of darkness; and being entered into the highest heavens, and 'set on the right hand of God,' as an act of power and royalty, he should send down his Holy Spirit in miraculous gifts upon men, for the conviction of the world, that the doctrine which he commanded his apostles to publish to all nations, was from God. And, therefore, the apostle St. Paul tells us expressly, that the communication of these gifts of the Spirit was the proper effect and consequent of our Lord's exaltation, and one of the first acts of royalty which

he exercised, after he was possessed of his glorious kingdom, Ephes. iv. 7, 8 where speaking of the various gifts of the Spirit, 'Unto every one of us,' saith he, 'is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ.' For which he cites the prediction of David: 'Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.'[1] And 'he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.' So that we plainly see, that this was the dispensation of God, and the method which his wisdom had pitched upon, that our Lord should first leave the world, and be taken up into glory, and then send down the Holy Ghost, in the plentiful effusions of miraculous gifts. So this evangelist expressly tells us in another place, which gives great light to the text: 'But this,' says he, 'spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.'[2] Implying, that according to the divine disposal, it was ordered first, that Christ should be glorified, and being invested in his kingdom and glory, that then he should do acts of grace, and like a king at his coronation, scatter and dispense his gifts among men, by sending down his Holy Spirit among them. And accordingly we find St. Peter, after that the Holy Ghost came down upon them, giving this account of it: 'This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses: therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth that which ye now

[1] Psal. lxviii. 18. [2] John, vii. 39.

see and hear;'[1] meaning the gift of tongues; so that he resolves it into the dispensation of God, who had thus designed and ordered things. And therefore in the

2. Second place, I shall show, that this dispensation is very congruous and suitable to the divine wisdom. For as it was convenient that the Son of God should assume our nature, and come into the world, and dwell among us, that he might reform mankind, by the purity of his doctrine and the pattern of his holy life; and likewise that he should suffer death, for the expiation of sin, in such a manner as might not only advance the mercy, but assert and vindicate the holiness of God, and testify his great hatred and displeasure against sin; so likewise, after he had thus abased himself to the lowest degree of meanness and suffering, it was very suitable to the divine goodness to reward such great sufferings with great glory, by raising him from the dead, and taking him up into heaven; but it was not fit, when he had left the world, that the great work for which he came into it should be given over, and come to nothing, for want of effectual prosecution, without any fruit and effect of so much sweat and blood. And therefore, though it had 'pleased the Lord to bruise him and put him to grief,' as the prophet expresseth it, yet the divine wisdom had so ordered things, that after 'he had made his soul an offering for sin, he should see his seed, and prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hands;' that 'he should see' some fruit of 'the travel of his soul, and be satisfied,' as the prophet foretels.[2]

[1] Acts, ii. 32, 33. [2] Isa. liii. 10.

So that, as it was expedient that he should die and depart this life; so it was also requisite afterwards, that he who had begun this great and good work, of the redemption and salvation of man, should take care to have it still prosecuted and carried on. And accordingly, since he was ascended into heaven, he still promotes the same design, *per vicariam vim Spiritus Sancti*, as Tertullian calls it, "by sending the Holy Ghost, as his deputy," for the managing of this work, and the propagating and establishing of that religion which he had planted in the world.

God foresaw that the greatest part of the Jewish nation would reject Christ and his doctrine, and that they would put him to death, as a deceiver and impostor; and because it was expedient that there should be such an expiatory sacrifice for sin, and that 'one man should die for all men,' God was willing to permit his Son to be thus dishonourably and unjustly treated, and 'by wicked hands to be crucified and slain;' because he knew very well how to make the malice of men subservient to his own gracious purpose and design; but yet he was not willing, that so much innocency and goodness should always lie under this reproach; from which, if he had not been vindicated, the design of the gospel had fallen to the ground, and presently come to nothing. And therefore, as a reward of his obedience and submission to the will of God, in these dreadful sufferings, in this cruel and dishonourable usage, God furnished him with this means of vindicating himself and his doctrine: he gave him power to send his Holy Spirit into the world, who should distribute miraculous gifts among his apostles and followers, that so both he and his doc-

trine might be effectually vindicated to the world, and a way made for the more speedy spreading and propagating of it.

So that we plainly see, that the wisdom of God had so ordered this whole dispensation, that every part of it, the birth, and life, and death, and resurrection, and ascension of our Lord, and the sending of the Holy Ghost, they are all subservient to one another, and to the whole design, viz. the reformation and salvation of mankind.

I have done with the first thing I propounded, the necessity of Christ's leaving the world, in order to the coming of the Holy Ghost. I shall now proceed

II. To the second thing I proposed, the happy consequence and effects of the coming of the Holy Ghost. 'When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.' There is a great difficulty in these words, and therefore I shall endeavour, as well as I can, to explain them, and then draw some useful inferences from the main doctrine contained in them.

For the explication of them :—' And when he,' that is the Holy Ghost, ' the advocate,' mentioned before, ' shall come,' that is, when the promise of the Father concerning the coming of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles shall be accomplished, ' he shall reprove the world ;' the word is ἐλέγξει, which I think may much more properly be rendered ' convince,'—' he shall convince the world.' And so it is used by this evangelist : ' Which of you,' says our Saviour, ' convinceth me of sin ?'[1] The very phrase used in the text, ' he shall convince the world of sin.' And the same word is also

[1] John, viii. 36.

used in the same sense by St. Paul, ἐλέγχειν ἀντιλέγοντας, 'to convince gainsayers.'[1] And this certainly is much more agreeable to the scope of this place; for though 'to reprove the world of sin' be a current expression, yet, 'to reprove the world of righteousness and of judgment' are very hard phrases, and I doubt, not intelligible; but to convince an adversary, or to satisfy a court, of the falsehood of the accusation and charge brought against the party accused, that is, to vindicate and justify him in his cause, this is the proper act of 'an advocate.'

So that the great end of the coming of the Holy Ghost, who is here called 'the advocate,' is to 'convince the world.' 'He shall convince the world'—that is, both Jews and Gentiles, who joined in their enmity against Christ, and agreed to put him to death—in these three points, 'concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment.' The expression is short and somewhat obscure, and seems (as Grotius and other learned men have not improbably thought) to allude to the three sorts of causes and actions among the Jews.

In the first, to public actions concerning criminal matters, among which was the case of believing or rejecting prophets. 'He shall convince the world of sin, because they believed not in me;' that is, he shall convince the world that I was a true prophet sent from God, and no impostor; and consequently, that they were guilty of a great contempt of God, and a horrible murder, in putting me to death.

In the second, there seems to be an allusion to that sort of private actions, which referred to the

[1] Tit. i. 9.

vindicating of innocence from false testimony and accusation, which are called by the name of 'righteousness.' 'He shall convince the world of righteousness.'

In the third, to that sort of actions which referred to the vindication and punishment of injuries, by way of retaliation upon him that did the injury, and which are called κρίσεις, or 'judgment.' 'He shall convince the world of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.'

But to explain these things more particularly.

1. 'He shall convince the world of sin, because they believe not on me;' that is, of the great sin they were guilty of, in rejecting this great prophet, and condemning him as a seducer and impostor. And of this they would remarkably be convinced, when they should see the predictions of Christ fulfilled, particularly that of sending the Holy Ghost, and of that terrible vengeance which should afterwards be executed on the Jewish nation, for rejecting the Son of God. The first of these we find eminently fulfilled upon the coming of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost.[1] For when the apostles by a sudden inspiration spake with other tongues, the Jews, and proselytes, who saw and heard them, were very much amazed at it,[2] and from this miraculous power of the Holy Ghost, so visible upon them, St. Peter takes occasion to convince the Jews of their great sin in rejecting the Messias and putting him to death. 'This Jesus,' saith he, 'hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses: wherefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having re-

[1] Acts, ii. [2] Ibid. ver. 7.

ceived of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear,'[1] From whence he concludes, 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.'[2] That is, by this you may be convinced, that he whom you crucified as a false prophet, was the true Messias. Upon this we find, that 'when the Jews heard this, they were pricked at their hearts; and said unto Peter, and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?'[3] Thus you see the first effect which our Saviour foretold of the coming of the Holy Ghost, fulfilled in a most eminent manner; for, upon this sermon, three thousand of the Jews being convinced of their great sin, in not believing on him, were baptized in his name.

2. 'He shall convince the world of righteousness;' that is, of the innocency of that holy and just person, whom they had condemned as a malefactor. 'Of righteousness, because I go to the Father;' that is, this shall be an evidence to the world of my innocency of those crimes with which I was charged; that I am taken up into heaven, and seated at the right hand of God, where I shall remain for ever, out of the reach of their malice and injury. 'Because I go to the Father, and ye see me no more;' that is, I shall be there, where their malice cannot reach me. For so he tells the Pharisees, when they came to apprehend him: 'Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me: ye shall seek me, and

[1] Acts, ii. 32, 33. [2] Ibid. ver. 36. [3] Ibid. ver. 37.

shall not find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come.'[1]

And this vindication of his innocency was begun by the miracles which immediately followed his death, upon which 'the centurion glorified God,' saying, 'certainly this was the Son of God,' as St. Matthew hath it; or, as St. Luke, 'this was a righteous man.'[2] And not only 'the centurion,' but 'all the people:' 'And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.'[3] But the great vindication of his innocency was his resurrection, which delivered him from that unjust sentence of death which was passed upon him, by raising him up to life again. And this is particularly ascribed to the Holy Ghost: 'And was mightily demonstrated to be the Son of God, by the Spirit of holiness, in his resurrection from the dead.'[4] Especially if we consider, that he was afterwards taken up visibly into heaven, and there invested with royal power and dignity; of which he gave plentiful evidence, in the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, poured forth upon the apostles; which was a standing demonstration to the world of his innocency and righteousness, since God had taken him up to himself, and 'set him at his own right hand,' and 'committed all power to him, in heaven and earth.'

3. 'He shall convince the world of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.' He that usurped the authority of God in the world, and by his instruments had procured Christ to be condemned as a counterfeit king, is himself de-

[1] John, vii. 33, 34. [2] Luke, xxiii. 47. [3] Ibid. ver. 48.
[4] Rom. i. 4.

throned and condemned: 'the prince of this world is judged.' He that thought to have destroyed the Son of God, by putting him to death, is by this very means destroyed himself. So the apostle tells us, that 'Christ through his death,' that is, upon occasion of his death, and his resurrection from the dead consequent upon it, hath 'destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.'[1]

But most remarkably was 'the prince of this world judged,' and 'cast out,' when after he had so long usurped the name and worship of God in the world, he was by that mighty power of the Spirit of God, which accompanied the preaching of the gospel, thrown out of his kingdom; and wherever the doctrine of Christ came, the idolatry of the world was not able to stand before it, but fell down, like Dagon before the ark. And that this is the meaning of 'judgment' here, is plain from the same Evangelist: 'Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And if I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me.'[2] Where our Saviour explains the 'judgment of this world,' by the 'casting out Satan' out of that power and authority which he hath usurped in the heathen world by his idolatrous worship: and therefore our Saviour foretels, that 'when he was lifted up from the earth,' that is, after he was crucified, and raised from the dead, and taken up into heaven, he 'would draw all men to him;' that is, his religion should prevail wonderfully in the world, and be enter-

[1] Heb. ii. 14. [2] John, xii. 31, 32.

tained in all nations. And this was most remarkably accomplished, by the wonderful progress of the gospel, and speedy downfal of idolatry in the world, 'not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord.' The acknowledgment of Porphyry, that bitter enemy of Christianity, as it is reported to us by Eusebius, is very remarkable, "That since one Jesus began to be worshipped, they found no public benefit from their gods; their miracles and their oracles ceased." This our Saviour foresaw and foretold, when he appointed and sent forth the seventy disciples to preach the gospel: 'I beheld Satan, like lightning fall from heaven,'[1] to express to us the sudden demolishing of his kingdom, and the quick and speedy overthrow of idolatry in the world. And thus I have explained, as briefly as I could, this difficult passage, concerning the Holy Ghost's 'convincing the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.'

I shall only draw two or three inferences from what hath been delivered, and so conclude.

1. We have great reason to adore the wisdom and goodness of God, in the dispensation of the gospel; that by the sending down of his Holy Spirit, to endow the first publishers of his heavenly doctrine with such miraculous power and gifts, he hath given such abundant testimony to the truth of our religion, and such firm grounds for our faith to rely upon. Had God left the Christian religion to have been propagated only by its own rational force upon the minds of men, what a slow progress would it in all probability have made? How little belief would the apostles' naked testimony of our

[1] Luke, x. 18.

Lord's resurrection from the dead, without any other demonstration or proof, have gained while they were alive, much less after their death? How unable would their doctrine, destitute of divine testimony, as well as of all human advantages, have been to have contested with the lusts and interests of men, the wit of the philosophers, and the power of the princes of this world, which all set themselves against it? How could it, with any hope of success, have encountered the malice of men and devils, which was so active and busy, by all possible violence, and by all imaginable arts to root it out of the world? Had the apostles of our Lord only gone forth, in the strength of their own interest and eloquence, (which in poor and unlearned men must needs be very small,) how little could they have contributed to the carrying on so great and difficult a work! Nay, had they not been supported, and borne up in their spirits by a mighty strength above their own, had not their commission been sealed by the miraculous power of the Holy Ghost, which upon all occasions showed forth itself in them, to the wonder and astonishment of men, and was a testimony from heaven to them, that they were the ambassadors of God to men, specially empowered and commissioned by him for that work, they could not but have been discouraged by the opposition and difficulties they met withal, and they might, with Moses, have declined the service, and desired God to send his message by others, that were fitter and better qualified to deliver it; and after some vain and unsuccessful attempts to propagate the belief of their doctrine, they would have given it over, and been ashamed of their rash undertaking. So Saint

Paul intimates, that had not the mighty power of God accompanied their preaching, and made it effectual to the conversion and salvation of men, they would have been tempted to have been 'ashamed of the gospel of Christ.'

But then we must remember, that it is the doctrine of Christ which is thus confirmed, and not the doctrines and traditions of men. For had the concealment of the doctrine of Christ, and the serving of God in an unknown tongue, been any part of the apostles' doctrine, the gift of tongues had not been a confirmation of this doctrine, but a contradiction to it; had they preached transubstantiation, and the renouncing of our senses, in order to the belief of it, miracles could have given no credit to it. For that which depends upon the certainty of sense (as miracles do) cannot be a competent argument, to prove that which is contrary to sense; for that which makes me sure of the miracle which should prove this doctrine, does at the same time make me equally sure that this doctrine is not true. If there were no other evidence, that transubstantiation is no part of the Christian doctrine, this to a wise man would be sufficient, that what proves the one overthrows the other; and that miracles, which are certainly the best and highest external proof of Christianity, are the worst proof in the world of transubstantiation, unless a man can renounce his senses at the same time, that he relies upon them; for a man cannot believe a miracle, without relying upon his senses, nor transubstantiation, without renouncing them. And never were any two things so ill coupled together, as the doctrine of Christianity and that of transubstantiation, because they draw several ways, and are ready to

strangle one another. The main evidence and confirmation of the Christian doctrine, which is miracles, is resolved into the certainty and testimony of our senses; but this evidence is clear and point blank against transubstantiation.

2. The consideration of what hath been said convinceth men of the great sin of infidelity, and the unreasonableness of it, after so clear conviction and demonstration as God hath given to the world of the truth of Christianity. That the gospel was planted and propagated in the world in so wonderful a manner, and prevailed, notwithstanding all the opposition that was made against it; the remarkable and terrible destruction of Jerusalem, according to our Saviour's prediction; the several attempts of rebuilding the temple, particularly by Julian the apostate, in despite to Christianity, and to confute our Saviour's prediction, so remarkably frustrated, and resisted from heaven, by fire flaming out of the foundation and consuming the workmen, so that they were forced to desist; and this recorded by a heathen historian, Ammianus Marcellinus; the dispersion of the Jewish nation, and their continuing for so many ages separate and distinct from all other people, for a standing accomplishment of our Saviour's prophecy, and a testimony to all ages of the truth of Christianity;—these, with many more arguments I might mention, are a clear evidence to any one that does not obstinately wink and shut his eyes against the light, that the doctrine of Christianity came from God.

3. They who believe the gospel are inexcusable if they do not obey it, and live according to it. This is the great end of all the miracles which God

hath wrought for the confirmation of Christianity; that by the belief of the gospel, men might be brought 'to the obedience of faith,' and live conformably to the precepts of that holy religion which the Son of God, by so many miracles, hath planted and preserved in the world. The infidelity of men will be a heavy charge upon them, at the judgment of the great day, and God will condemn them for it; but we that profess to believe the gospel, and live contrary to it, shall not only be condemned by the judgment of God, but by the sentence of our own consciences. Our profession to believe the gospel will be an aggravation of our disobedience to it, and every article of our creed will be a sore charge against us; and that faith, which was ordained to justify us, will be our great condemnation at the great day.

Therefore, as the apostle to the Hebrews argues, 'We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we fall away,' either by infidelity or impiety of life; 'for if the word spoken by angels was steadfast,' that is, if disobedience to the law of Moses was so severely punished, 'and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which was at first spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed afterwards by them that heard him? God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost.' For, 'if we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that

despised Moses died without mercy, under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment shall we be thought worthy, if we tread under foot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant, whereby we are sanctified, an unholy thing, and offer despite to the Spirit of grace! It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. But, beloved, I hope better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though I thus speak; and that you are not of the number of those who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of your souls.

SERMON II.

THE CHRISTIAN PENTECOST.

BY DR. SOUTH.

[Robert South was born in 1631, and died in 1716.]

SERMON II.

1 Cor. xii. 4.

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

Our blessed Saviour having newly changed his crown of thorns for a crown of glory, and ascending up on high, taken possession of his royal estate and sovereignty, according to the custom of princes, is here treating with this lower world, (now at so great a distance from him) by his ambassador. And, for the great splendour of the embassy and authority of the message, by an ambassador no ways inferior to himself, even the Holy Ghost, the third person in the blessed Trinity, 'in glory equal, in majesty co-eternal;' and therefore most peculiarly fit, not only as a deputy, but as a kind of *alter idem,* to supply his place and presence here upon earth: and indeed, had he not been equal to him in the Godhead, he could no more have supplied his place than he could have filled it; which we know, in the accounts of the world, are things extremely different, as by sad and scandalous experience is too often found.

Now the sum of this, his glorious negotiation

was to confirm and ratify Christ's doctrine, to seal the new charter of the world's blessedness, given by Christ himself, and drawn up by his apostles: and certainly, it was not a greater work first to publish than it was afterwards to confirm it. For Christianity, being a religion made up of truth and miracle, could not receive its growth from any power less than that which first gave it its birth. And being withal a doctrine contrary to corrupt nature, and to those things which men most eagerly loved; to wit, their worldly interests and their carnal lusts, it must needs have quickly decayed, and withered, and died away, if not watered by the same hand of Omnipotence by which it was first planted.

Nothing could keep it up, but such a standing, mighty power as should be able, upon all occasions, to countermand and control nature; such an one as should, at the same time, both instruct and astonish and baffle the disputes of reason, by the obvious overpowering convictions of sense.

And this was the design of the Spirit's mission, that the same Holy Ghost who had given Christ his conception, might now give Christianity its confirmation. And this he did by that wonderful and various effusion of his miraculous gifts upon the first messengers and propagators of this divine religion. For, as our Saviour himself said, 'unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe:'[1] so that sight was to introduce belief; and accordingly, the first conquest and conviction was made upon the eye, and from thence passed victorious to the heart.

[1] John, iv. 48.

This therefore was their rhetoric, this their method of persuasion. Their words were works; divinity and physic went together: they cured the body, and thereby convinced the soul: they conveyed and enforced all their exhortations, not by the arts of eloquence, but by the gift of tongues; these were the speakers, and miracle the interpreter.

Now, in treating of these words, I shall consider these three things:—

First, What those gifts were, which were conferred by the Spirit both upon the apostles and first professors of Christianity.

Secondly, What is imported and to be understood by their diversity; and,

Thirdly, and lastly, What are the consequences of their emanation from one and the same Spirit.

I. And first, for the first of them. These gifts are called in the original *χαρίσματα*, that is to say, acts of grace, or favour; and signify here certain qualities and perfections, which the Spirit of God freely bestowed upon men, for the better enabling them to preach the gospel and to settle the Christian religion in the world: and accordingly we will consider them under that known dichotomy, or division, by which they stand divided into ordinary and extraordinary.

And first, for the ordinary gifts of the Spirit; these he conveys to us by the mediation of our own endeavours. And as he who both makes the watch and winds up the wheels of it, may not improperly be said to be the author of its motion; so God, who first created and since sustains the powers and faculties of the soul, may justly be called the cause of all those perfections and improvements

which the said faculties shall attain unto by their respective operations. For that which gives the form gives also the consequents of that form; and the principle, with all its appendant actions, is to be referred to the same donor.

But God forbid that I should determine God's title to our actions barely in his giving us the power and faculty of acting. Durandus indeed, an eminent schoolman, held so; and so must Pelagius and his followers hold too, if they will be true to, and abide by their own principles.

But, undoubtedly, God does not only give the power, but also vouchsafes an active influence and concurrence to the production of every particular action, so far as it has either a natural or a moral goodness in it.

And therefore, in all acquired gifts or habits, such as are those of philosophy, oratory, or divinity, we are properly συνεργοὶ, "co-workers with God." And God ordinarily gives them to none, but to such as labour hard for them. They are so his gifts, that they are also our own acquisitions. His assistance and our own study are the joint and adequate cause of these perfections. And to imagine the contrary is all one as if a man should think to be a scholar barely by his master's teaching, without his own learning. In all these cases God is ready to do his part, but not to do both his own and ours too.

Secondly, the other sort of the Spirit's gifts are extraordinary; which are so absolutely and entirely from God, that the soul, into which they are conveyed, contributes nothing to the obtaining of them but a bare reception: as when you pour some generous wine or liquor into a cask or vessel,

that affords nothing to its own fulness but a mere capacity; the rest it owes wholly to the liberal hand that infused it. And, no doubt, from an allusion to this, such endowments are said to be by way of infusion from the Holy Ghost.

Of which kind were the gift of miracles, the gift of healing, the gift of prophecy and of speaking with tongues; which great things might indeed be the object of men's admiration, and sometimes also the motive of their envy, but never the effect or purchase of their own endeavours.

Now, concerning these gifts, we must observe also, that there was no small difference amongst them, as to the manner of their inexistence in the persons who had them.

For one of them, to wit, the gift of tongues, after its first infusion by the Spirit, might be in a man by habitual inherence, as a standing principle or power residing in the soul, and enabling it upon any occasion to express itself in several languages: there being no difference between the acquired and the supernatural knowledge of tongues, as to the nature and quality of the things themselves, but only in respect of their first obtainment, that one is by industrious acquisition, the other by divine infusion.

But then, for the gifts of healing the sick, raising the dead, and the like; inasmuch as these were immediate emanations from, and peculiar effects of an infinite and divine power, such a power could never be made habitually to inhere and reside in the apostles, nor, indeed, in any created being whatsoever; but only by an exterior assistance, the power of God was ready at hand, upon special and emergent occasions, at their invocation or word,

(as God should think fit) to produce such miraculous effects: for, if this power of healing had been habitually lodged in the apostles, so that they might exert and make use of it when they pleased, it will be hard to give a satisfactory reason, why St. Paul should leave Trophimus at Miletum sick, as we find he did.[1]

And then, lastly, for the gift of prophecy and foretelling future events; neither was this in the soul by constant inhesion and habitual abode; but (as we may not unfitly express it) only by sudden strictures, by transient immissions and representations of the ideas of things future to the imagination. In a word, it was in the mind not as an inhabitant, but as a guest; that is, by intermittent returns and ecstasies, by occasional raptures and revelations; as is clear from what we read of the prophets in the Old Testament. And thus much I thought good to discourse of the nature of these gifts; and to show what kind of things they were; how they qualified and affected the apostles and primitive Christians, in the exercise of them; that so we may not abuse our understandings by an empty notion of the word, without a clear and distinct apprehension of the thing.

And here I doubt not but some will be apt to inquire, how long these extraordinary and miraculous gifts continued in the church? For the resolution of which, the very nature of the thing itself will suggest thus much, that the conferring of these gifts being in order to the establishment of a church and the settling of a new religion in the world, their duration was to be proportioned to the

[1] 2 Tim. iv. 20.

need, which that new religion had of such credentials and instruments of confirmation. For when Christianity first appeared in the world, it found it under the mighty prejudice and prepossession of two contrary religions, but both of them equally bent and set against that; to wit, Gentilism and Judaism; which prejudices nothing could conquer but the arm of Omnipotence itself (as it were) made bare before them, in such stupendous works, as could not but convince them to their face, that it was a religion which came from God. But when these prejudices were once removed by the actual entertainment of, and submission to the Christian faith, there could not be the same use or need of miracles then which there was before. For we must remember, that the state of a church in its infancy and first beginnings, and in its maturity and continuance is very different; and consequently that the exigencies of it, under each condition, must equally differ too. It is a much harder work first to advance, and put a thing into motion, than to continue and keep up that motion being once begun. For though, indeed, (as we observed before) there is an Omnipotence required to maintain as well as first to set up the Christian church, yet it does not therefore follow that this Omnipotence must still exert itself to the same degree, and after the same way, in one case that it does in the other.

Wherefore the use and purpose of miracles being extraordinary and to serve only for a time, they were not by their continuance to thwart their design, nor to be made common by their being perpetual. The exact period of their duration can hardly be assigned; but manifest it is from all

history, that they (or at least some of them) continuèd long after the apostles' time; as we may gather from the several ages of those eminent fathers and Christian writers who have so freely given in their testimony concerning the ejecting of evil spirits from persons possessed, as very common in their time in the Christian church; a power no doubt supernatural, and therefore miraculous. Such were Justin Martyr, who lived something before the middle of the second century, and Irenæus, who lived about thirty years after, and Tertullian, who lived in the latter end of the second and the beginning of the third, and Minutius Felix, thereabouts, and St. Cyprian, about the middle of the third, and Lactantius, about the beginning of the fourth. All these, I say, according to the times they lived in, but more especially Tertullian,[1] speak of this power of casting out devils with so much assurance, that it must needs prove it to have been very frequent amongst the Christians in those days; as several passages in those forementioned writers particularly declare; which might easily be produced and rehearsed by us, could we spare room enough for them in so short a discourse.

However, certain it is, that now these extraordinary and miraculous powers are ceased, and that upon as good reason as at first they began. For when the spiritual building is consummate, and not only the corner-stone laid, but the superstructure also finished, to what purpose should the scaffolds any longer stand? which, when they leave off to contribute to the building, can serve for little else but to upbraid the folly of the builder.

[1] Apol. c 23.

Besides, that by so long a continuance, miracle would almost turn into nature; or, at least look very like it; the rarities of heaven would grow cheap and common, and (which is very preposterous to conceive) they would be miracles without a wonder.

The Papists, indeed, who having swallowed and digested the belief of so many monstrous contradictions, would do but very unwisely and disagreeably to themselves, if for ever after they should stick at any advantageous absurdity: these, I say, hold that the gift of miracles still continues ordinary in their church, and that the Christian religion has still the same need of such miraculous confirmations as it had at first.

If by the Christian they mean their own Popish religion, I am so fully of their own mind that I think there is need, not only of daily, but even of hourly, or rather continued miracles, to confirm it; if it were but in that one single article of transubstantiation. But then we know whose badge and character the Scripture makes it, to 'come in lying wonders;' and we know also, that lying wonders are true impostures: and theirs are of that nature, that the fallacy is so gross and the cheat is so transparent in them, that, as it hardens the Jews and Mahomedans with a desperate, invincible prejudice against Christianity, as a thing as false as those miracles which they see it recommended by; so, I am confident, that it causes many Christians also to nauseate their own religion, and to fall into secret atheism; being apt to think (as even these impostors also pretend) that the very miracles of the apostles might be of the same nature with those which they see daily acted by these spiritual

jugglers. So that hereby the grand proof of Christianity falls to the ground, and has no force or hold upon men's minds at all; whereas our Saviour himself laid the main stress and credit of his gospel, and of his mission from God, upon his miracles. 'The works that I do,' says he, 'bear witness of me;'[1] and, 'Believe me for my very work's sake;'[2] and, 'Had I not done amongst them the works which no other man did, they had not had sin.'[3] So that we see here, that the credit of all turned upon his miracles, his mighty and supernatural works.

But as, we know, it often falls out, that when a man has once got the character of a liar, even truth itself is suspected, if not absolutely disbelieved when it comes from the mouth of such an one. So these miracle-mongers, having alarmed the world round about them to a discernment of their tricks, when they came afterwards to preach Christianity, especially to infidels, and to press it upon men's belief, in the strength of those miraculous works which were truly and really done by Christ; yet, since they pretend the same of their own works too, (which all people see through, and know to be lies and impostures,) all that they preach of Christ is presently looked upon as false and fictitious, and leaves the minds of men locked up under a fixed, obstinate, and impregnable infidelity. Such a fatal blow has the legerdemain of those teachers given to the Christian religion, and such jealousies have they raised in some men's thoughts against it, by their false miracles and fabulous stories of the romantic feats of their pre-

[1] John, x. 25. [2] Ib. xiv. 11. [3] Ib. xv. 24.

tended saints. In all which there is nothing indeed strange and miraculous, but the impudence and impiety of such as report and make them, and the folly of such as can believe them.

II. Pass we now to the second thing proposed; which is, to show what is meant by this diversity of gifts mentioned in the text. It imports, I conceive, these two things:—

1. Something by way of affirmation, which is variety.

2. Something by the way of negation, which is contrariety.

1. And first, for the first of them. It imports variety; of which excellent qualification, it is hard to say whether it makes more for use or ornament. It is the very beauty of providence, and the delight of the world. It is that which keeps alive desire, which would otherwise flag and tire, and be quickly weary of any one single object. It both supplies our affections and entertains our admiration; equally serving the innocent pleasures and the important occasions of life. And now all these advantages God would have this desirable quality derive even upon his church too; in which great body there are and must be several members, having their several uses, offices, and stations: as, in the 28th verse of this chapter, (where my text is,) the apostle tells us, that 'God has placed in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly preachers; after that miracles; then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues: the particular function and employment of so many parts subserving the joint interest and design of the whole; as the motion of a clock is a

complicated motion of so many wheels fitly put together, and life itself but the result of so many several operations, all issuing from, and contributing to the support of the same body. The great help and furtherance of action, is order; and the parent of order is distinction. No sense, faculty, or member must encroach upon, or interfere with the duty and office of another. For as the same apostle discourses in the two next verses, 'Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gift of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?' No; but as in the natural body the eye does not speak, nor the tongue see; so neither in the spiritual, is every one who has the gift of prophecy endued also with the gift and spirit of government. Every one who may speak well and pertinently enough upon a text, is not therefore presently fit to rule a diocess; nor is a nimble tongue always attended with a strong and steady head. If all were preachers, who should govern? or rather, indeed, who could be governed? If the body of the church were all ear, men would be only 'hearers of the word,' and where would then be 'the doers?' For such, I am sure, we are most to seek for in our days, in which sad experience shows that hearing of sermons has, with most, swallowed up and devoured the practice of them, and manifestly serves instead of it; rendering many zealots amongst us as really guilty of the superstition of resting in the bare *opus operatum* of this duty, as the Papists are, or can be charged to be, in any of their religious performances whatsoever. The apostle justly reproaches such with

'itching ears.'[1] And I cannot see, but that the itch in the ear is as bad a distemper as in any other part of the body, and perhaps a worse.

But to proceed. God has use of all the several tempers and constitutions of men, to serve the occasions and exigences of his church by; amongst which some are of a sanguine, cheerful, and debonair disposition, having their imaginations, for the most part, filled and taken up with pleasing ideas and images of things; seldom or never troubling their thoughts, either by looking too deep into them, or dwelling too long upon them. And these are not properly framed to serve the church either in the knotty, dark, and less pleasing parts of religion, but are fitted rather for the airy, joyful offices of devotion; such as are praise and thanksgiving, jubilations and hallelujahs; which, though indeed not so difficult, are yet as pleasing a work to God as any other; for they are the noble employment of saints and angels, and a lively resemblance of the glorified and beatific state; in which all that the blessed spirits do, is to rejoice in the God who made and saved them, to sing his praises, and to adore his perfections.

Again, there are others of a melancholy, reserved, and severe temper, who think much and speak little; and these are the fittest to serve the church in the pensive, afflictive parts of religion; in the austerities of repentance and mortification, in a retirement from the world, and a settled composure of their thoughts to self-reflection and meditation. And such also are the ablest to deal with troubled and distressed consciences, to meet with

[1] 2 Tim. iv. iii.

their doubts, and to answer their objections, and to ransack every corner of their shifting and fallacious hearts, and, in a word, to lay before them the true state of their souls, having so frequently descended into and took a strict account of their own. And this is so great work, that there are not many whose minds and tempers are capable of it, who yet may be serviceable enough to the church in other things. And it is the same thoughtful and reserved temper of spirit which must enable others to serve the church in the hard and controversial parts of religion; which sort of men (though they should never rub men's itching ears from the pulpit) the church can no more be without, than a garrison can be without soldiers, or a city without walls; or than a man can defend himself with his tongue, when his enemy comes against him with his sword. And therefore, great pity it is, that such as God has eminently and peculiarly furnished, and (as it were) cut out for this service, should be cast upon, and compelled to the popular, speaking, noisy part of divinity; it being all one as if, when a town is besieged, the governor of it should call off a valiant and expert soldier from the walls, to sing him a song, or play him a lesson upon a violin at a banquet, and then turn him out of town because he could not sing and play as well as he could fight. And yet as ridiculous as this is, it is but too like the irrational and absurd humour of the present age, which thinks all sense and worth confined wholly to the pulpit. But for all these false notions and wrong measures of things and persons, so scandalously prevalent amongst us, 'wisdom,' as our Saviour tell us, 'is and will be justified of her children.'

But then again, there are others besides these, who are of a warmer and more fervent spirit, having much of heat and fire in their constitution. And God may and does serve his church even by such kind of persons as these also, as being particularly fitted to preach the terrifying rigours and curses of the law to obstinate, daring sinners; which is a work as absolutely necessary, and of as high a consequence to the good of souls, as it is that men should be driven, if they cannot be drawn off, from their sins; that they should be cut and lanced, if they cannot otherwise be cured; and that the terrible trump of the last judgment should be always sounding in their ears, if nothing else can awaken them. But then, while such persons are thus busied in preaching of judgment, it is much to be wished that they would do it with judgment too; and not preach hell and damnation to sinners so, as if they were pleased with what they preached. No; let them rather take heed that they mistake not their own fierce temper for the mind of God; for some I have known to do so, and that at such a rate, that it was easy enough to distinguish the humour of the speaker from the nature of the thing he spoke. Let ministers threaten death and destruction, even to the very worst of men, in such a manner, that it may appear to all their sober hearers, that they do not desire, but fear that these dreadful things should come to pass: let them declare God's wrath against the hardened and impenitent, as I have seen a judge condemn a malefactor, with tears in his eyes: for surely much more should a dispenser of the word, while he is pronouncing the infinitely more killing sentence of the divine law, grieve

with an inward bleeding compassion for the misery of those forlorn wretches whom it is like to pass upon.

But then, on the contrary, there are others again of a gentler, a softer, and more tender genius; and these are full as serviceable for the work of the ministry as the former sort could be, though not in the same way; as being much fitter to represent the meekness of Moses than to preach his law; to bind up the broken-hearted, to speak comfort and refreshment to the weary, and to take off the burden from the heavy laden. Nature itself seems peculiarly to have fitted such for the dispensations of grace; and when they are once put into the ministry, they are (as it were) marked and singled out by Providence, to do those benign offices to the souls of men which persons of a rougher and more vehement disposition are by no means so fit or able to do. These are the men which God pitches upon for the heralds of his mercy, with a peculiar emphasis and felicity of address, to proclaim and issue out the pardons of the gospel; to close up the wounds which the legal preacher had made; to bathe and supple them with the oil of gladness; and, in a word, to crown the sorrows of repentance with the joys of assurance. And thus we have seen how the gospel must have both its Boanarges and its Barnabas, 'sons of thunder,' and 'sons of consolation:' the first (as it were) to cleanse the air and purge the soul, before it can be fit for the refreshments of a sunshine, the beams of mercy, and the smiles of a Saviour.

David had shown himself but a mean Psalmist, had his skill reached no further than to one note; and therefore we have him singing of judgment as well

as mercy;[1] and so raising the sweetest harmony out of the seeming discord of the most disagreeing attributes. There can be no composition in any thing without some multiplicity and diversity of parts; and therefore we have a catalogue of those gifts, which did (as it were) compound and make up the primitive church, in the 8th, 9th, and 10th verses of this 12th chapter of the first to the Corinthians; where the apostle tells us, that 'to one is given the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, to another faith;' with many more such like gifts there reckoned up; and, indeed, so many and various were the gifts poured out by the Spirit of God upon the first preachers of the gospel, that there is need almost of the gift of tongues to rehearse them.

Of which great variety, as we have hitherto observed the use, so it is intended also for the ornament of the church. I say ornament; for I cannot persuade myself that God ever designed his church for a rude, naked, unbeautified lump; or to lay the foundations of purity in the ruins of decency. The entrance and gate of Solomon's temple was called Beautiful; and, as there were several orders of priests and Levites belonging to it, so they had their several offices, their several chambers and apartments, in that temple. It was a kind of representation of heaven; in which our Saviour tells us, there 'are many mansions.' But, behold! there are wiser, much wiser than Solomon amongst us, who will have it quite otherwise in the Christian church. Nothing of order or distinction, nothing of splendour or dress must be allowed of here.

Much might be spoken by way of analogy between the internal and external, the spiritual and

[1] Psalm ci. 1.

the material ornaments of the church; but both of them serve to dress and set-off the spouse of Christ; the first to recommend her to his own eyes, and the latter to the eyes of the world.

Where would be the beauty of the heavens themselves, if it were not for the multitude of the stars, and the variety of their influences? And then, for the earth here below and those who dwell therein, certainly we might live without the plumes of peacocks, and the curious colours of flowers; without so many different odours, so many several tastes, and such an infinite diversity of airs and sounds. But where would then be the glory and lustre of the universe, the flourish and gaiety of nature, if our senses were forced to be always poring upon the same things, without the diversion of change, and the quickening relish of variety? And now, when matters stand thus, may we not justly say, if God so clothes the fields, so paints the flowers, and paves the very places we tread upon, and with such curiosity provides for all our senses, which yet are but the servants and under-officers of the soul, shall he not much more provide for the soul itself and his own service thereby, in the glorious economy, and great concernments of the church? And moreover, does not such a liberal effusion of gifts equally argue both the power and the bounty of the Giver? Number and multitude are the signs of riches, and the materials of plenty; and therefore, though unity in the government and communion of the church is indeed a great blessing, yet, in the gifts and endowments of it, it would be but penury and a curse. But,

2. As this diversity of the Spirit's gifts imports variety, so it excludes contrariety. Different they are, but they are not opposite. There is no jar, no

combat or contest between them, but all are disposed of with mutual agreements and a happy subordination; for as variety adorns, so opposition destroys. Things most different in nature may yet be united in the same design; and the most distant lines may meet and clasp in the same centre.

As for instance, one would think that the spirit of meekness and the spirit of zeal stood at that distance of contrariety, as to defy all possibility either of likeness or reconcilement; and yet (as we have already shown) they both may and do equally serve and carry on the great end and business of religion. And the same Spirit which baptizes with water, baptizes also with fire. It is an art to attain the same end by several methods, and to make things of a quite contrary operation to concur in one and the same effect.

III. Come we now to the third and last thing proposed from the words; which is, to show what are the consequences of this emanation of so many and different gifts from one and the same Spirit: I shall instance in four, directly and naturally deducible from it. As,

1. If the Spirit works such variety of gifts, and those in so vast a multitude, and for the most part above the force of nature, certainly it is but rational to conclude, that it is a being superior to nature, and so may justly challenge to itself a deity. There have been several who have impugned the deity of the Holy Ghost, though not in the same manner; but the principal of them come within these two sorts:—

First, Macedonius and his followers, who allowed him to be a person, but denied his deity. Affirm-

ing him to be the chief angel, the supreme and most excellent of those blessed spirits employed by God in administering the affairs of the church, and conveying good suggestions to the minds of men, and for that cause to be called the Holy Spirit; and sometimes simply and κατ' ἐξοχην, or by way of eminence, the Spirit. And the same was held also by one Biddle, an heretic of some note here in England, a little before the Restoration; that is to say, while confusion and toleration gave countenance to almost all religions except the true.

But secondly, Socinus and his school, deny both the deity of the Holy Ghost, and his personal subsistence too; not granting him to be a person, but only the power of God. To wit, that *vis* or ἐνέργεια, by which he effects or produces things. And, amongst those who assert this, none have given such bold strokes at the deity of the Holy Ghost, as Crellius, in his book *de uno Deo Patre*, and his other *de Spiritu Sancto.*

Now, to draw forth and insist upon all the arguments and texts of Scripture, which use to be traversed on both sides in this controversy, would be a thing neither to be done within this compass of time, nor perhaps so proper for this exercise; and therefore, let it suffice us upon the warrant of express Scripture, not sophisticated by nice and forced expositions, but plainly interpreted by the general tradition of the church (to which all private reason ought in reason to give place) to confess and adore the deity of the Holy Ghost.

This Holy Spirit, then, is in the church as the soul in the natural body, for as the same soul does in and by the several parts of the body exercise several functions and operations, so the Holy Ghost,

while he animates the mystical body of Christ, causes in it several gifts and powers, by which he enables it to exert variety of actions. And as in the river Nilus, it is the same fountain which supplies the seven streams, so when we read of the seven spirits,[1] they are but so many several gifts of the same Spirit, all bearing the name and title of their donor, as it is usual for so many several volumes to bear the single denomination of their author; and we say properly enough, that such an one has read Cicero or Plutarch, when he has read their works.

But now surely this glorious person or being, who thus 'enlightens the minds of all men coming into the world' in some measure, and of the church more especially, cannot be in the rank and number of created beings. The heathens attributed a kind of divinity or godhead to springs, because of that continual inexhaustible emanation from them, resembling a kind of infinity: but here we see the very gifts of the Spirit to be divine; and where we find such a divinity in the stream, certainly we may well ascribe it in a more transcendant manner, to the fountain. Besides, if the Holy Ghost were not God, I cannot see how our bodies could be well called his temples; since none but God can challenge to himself the prerogative of a temple. And so much for the first consequent. But,

2. This great diversity of the Spirit's gifts may read a lecture of humility to some, and of contentment to others. God indeed, in this great scheme of the creation, has drawn some capital letters, set forth some master-pieces, and furnished them with

[1] Rev. iv. 5.

higher abilities than ordinary, and given them gifts (as it were) with both hands. But for all that, none can brag of a monopoly of them; none has so absolutely engrossed them all as to be that thing of which we may say, Here we see what and how much God can do. No: God has wrote upon no created being the utmost stint of his power, but only the free issues and products of his pleasure. God has made no man in *opprobrium naturæ*; only to overlook his fellow-creatures, to upbraid them with their defects, and to discourage them with the amazing distance of the comparison. He has filled no man's intellectuals so full but he has left some vacuities in them, that may sometimes send him for supplies to minds of a much lower pitch. He has stocked no land or country with such universal plenty without the mixture of some wants, to be the ground and cause of commerce; for mutual wants and mutual perfections together are the bond and cement of conversation. The vast knowledge and ruling abilities of Moses might yet stand in need of Aaron's elocution; and he who speaks with the tongue of angels, and the greatest fluency of spiritual rhetoric, may yet be at a loss, when he comes to matters of controversy, and to assert the truth against the assaults and sophistry of a subtle opponent. God indeed can, and sometimes happily does unite both these gifts in the same person. But where he does not, let not him who can preach condemn him who can only dispute; neither let him who can dispute despise him who can only preach. For (as we have shown before) the church is served by both, and has equally need of some men to speak and declare the word, and of others to defend it: it being enough,

and too often more than enough, for one to maintain what another says. In which work the speaking part is indeed the more easy, but the defensive the more glorious.

And as this may give some check to the presumption of the most raised understandings, so it should prevent the despondency of the meanest. For the apostle makes this very use of it in 1 Cor. xii. 21, 22, where he would not have even the lowest and poorest member of the church to be dejected, upon the consideration of what it wants, but rather be comforted in the sense of what it has. Let not the foot trample upon itself because it does not rule the body, but consider that it has the honour to support it: nay, the greatest abilities are sometimes beholden to the very meanest, if but for this only, that without them they would want the gloss and lustre of a foil. The two talents went into heaven as easily as the five. And God has put a peculiar usefulness even into the smallest members of the body, answerable to some need or defect in the greatest; thereby to level them to a mutual intercourse of compliance and benefaction, which alone can keep things equal, and is indeed the very poise and balast of society. And thus much for the second consequent. But,

3. The foregoing doctrine affords us also a touchstone for the trial of spirits. For such as are the gifts, such must be also the spirit from which they flow. And since both of them have been so much pretended to, it is well for the church that it has rule of judgment, and a note of discrimination.[1]

[1] The reader, who seeks in these pages only matter of Christian edification, will readily pardon the omissson, at this place,

4. In the fourth and last place, this emanation of gifts from the Spirit, assures us that knowledge and learning are by no means opposite to grace; since we see gifts as well as graces conferred by the same Spirit. But amongst those of the late reforming age all learning was utterly cried down. So that with them the best preachers were such as could not read, and the ablest divines such as could not write. In all their preachments they so highly pretended to the Spirit, that they could hardly so much as spell the letter. To be blind was with them the proper qualification of a spiritual guide, and to be book-learned (as they called it) and to be irreligious were almost terms convertible. None were thought fit for the ministry but tradesmen and mechanics, because none else were allowed to have the Spirit. Those only were accounted like St. Paul who could work with their hands, and in a literal sense, drive the nail home, and be able to make a pulpit before they preached in it.

But the Spirit in the primitive church took quite another method; being still as careful to furnish the head as to sanctify the heart; and, as he wrought

of several paragraphs, though among the most caustic specimens of that peculiar manner for which the writings of Dr. South are more generally known than for the sound learning, solid divinity, and vigorous style which distinguish them. We may safely pronounce the national mind to have fallen into a morbid condition, whenever it shall have become impatient of the lessons suggested by a review of those scandalous extravagances which disgraced our religious sects in the seventeenth century. It were well, indeed, if all parties would frequently renew the contemplation of those evils, with their causes and consequences, in the records of history; but of history they are, now at least, the proper province, whatever they may have been at the time when this discourse was written. At all events, their exposure in the extreme bitterness of contemporary controversy, appears scarcely to harmonize with the general design of the SACRED CLASSICS.—ED.

miracles to found and establish a church by these extraordinary gifts, so it would have been a greater miracle to have done it without them.

God, as he is 'the giver of grace,' so he is the 'Father of lights;' he neither admits darkness in himself nor approves it in others. And therefore those who place all religion in the heats of a furious zeal, without the due illuminations of knowledge, know not of what spirit they are; indeed of such a spirit as begins in darkness, leads to it, and ends in it.

But certainly, we shall one day find that such a religion neither was nor could be the readiest way to heaven: but on the contrary, that the Spirit always guides and instructs before he saves; and that as he brings to happiness only by the ways of holiness, so he never leads to true holiness but by the paths of knowledge.

To which Holy Spirit, together with the Father and the Son; three persons and one God, be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON III.

THE GIFTS AND GRACES OF THE HOLY GHOST.

BY DR. RIDLEY.

[GLOCESTER RIDLEY was born 1702; was made a prebendary of Salisbury in 1768, and died in 1774.]

SERMON III.

ACTS, XIX. 2.

Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?

IF the Holy Ghost be God, 'behold the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him; how much less this house,'[1] this temple of the human body? By receiving him then we do not limit and circumscribe his presence. The apostles had him bestowed upon them, in order to teach all nations in their several dispersions; and when they separated from one another, they were not separated from him, by whose continued assistance they had power to 'be witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.'[2] This boundless sphere of his activity and communion with Christians in every place, is an argument of his divinity against those who would degrade him into the rank of creatures; and this consideration of his immensity would lead us to change the question, and, instead of asking, whether we have

[1] 1 Kings, viii. 27. [2] Acts, i. 8.

received, rather inquire how it is possible to exclude him? For there is no 'going from the presence of this Spirit.'[1] As the power of God is infinite, yet by us discerned only in some particular instances; so the Holy Ghost, though he pervades all things, yet yields some especial notices of himself, which are particular evidences of his presence. Thus, as we see God in the works of creation, so we feel the Holy Ghost in our souls; not that either of them are themselves the objects of our senses, but we discern them in their works: 'the heavens declare the glory of God,'[2] and diversities of gifts are a manifestation of the Spirit.[3] This manifestation or exhibition of him in any particular place, is a proof of his presence there, where, before such exhibition, we had no particular proof; for which reason he is sometimes represented as if he then began to exist, as 'the Holy Ghost was not yet;'[4] but more generally as moving to the place where he manifests himself; as when he is said to be 'sent,'[5] to be 'shed,'[6] or 'poured forth;'[7] agreeably to which we are said to 'be filled with,'[8] and 'to receive him,'[9] when by such diversities of gifts we perceive his presence in our souls. Wherefore, in order to know whether we have received the Holy Ghost or not, we must

[1] Psalm cxxxix. 7. [2] Psalm xix. 1.

[3] 1 Cor. xii. 4, 7. Ἄλλη ἡ δύναμις ἡ χορηγȣμένη, ϗ ἄλλο τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ χορηγȣ̃ν. Chrys. Hom. lxxii. tom. vi.

[4] John, vii. 39. Καλεῖται πνεῦμα ἡ τȣ̃ πνεύματος χάρις, ȣ̓κ οὐσία τȣ̃ πνεύματος, ἀλλ' ἡ ἐνέργεια τȣ̃ πνεύματος.—Ibid. cxxi. tom. v.

[5] 1 Pet. i. 12. [6] Tit. iii. 5, 6.

[7] Acts, ii. 17; x. 45. Θεότης ȣ̓κ ἐκχεῖται, ἀλλ' ἡ δωρεά. Ibid. lxxii. tom. vi.

[8] Acts, ii. 4; vi. 3. [9] Acts, viii. 17; x. 47.

First, Discover those diversities of gifts which are the manifestations of the Spirit. And,

Secondly, Endeavour to distinguish them from mistaken or counterfeit proofs.

First, We must discover those diversities of gifts, which are the manifestation of the Spirit.

In order to which we are to observe, that this manifestation is said to be 'given;'[1] it is therefore what we have no claim to from nature, no demand from merit, but proceeds from the mere bounty of the Giver, *πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον*,[2] for the benefit of mankind, and is therefore called grace, or favour;[3] and is given us either for our own profit and advantage, immediately for the salvation of ourselves, or for the profit of others, as means to bring them to salvation.[4] The first may be called saving, the second ministering grace.

I. Saving grace is various, suited to our various wants and corruptions. Our understandings are dark, our wills perverse, our affections sensual; we want assistance in every faculty: and the Holy Ghost vouchsafes to dwell in our hearts, that he may influence the whole soul. The manner of the influence is imperceptible to our senses, for God cannot be the object of them, so that we neither hear, nor see, nor feel the motion of it; but the effects are notorious, and manifest the progress of

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 7. [2] Ibid.

[3] Rom. xi. 6; xii. 6; 2 Cor. viii. 7.

[4] Duplex est operatio Spiritus Sancti, operatur enim in nobis aliud propter nos, aliud propter proximos.—"The work of the Holy Spirit is twofold; for there is a difference between what is wrought within us in respect to ourselves, and what in respect to others."—Bern. In the schools the first is called the grace of adoption, or gratia gratum faciens; the second the grace of edification, or gratia gratis data, and *χάρις διακονίας*.

the Spirit. Grace, like 'seed cast into the ground,' springs and grows up we know not how. But when we see, in one case, 'first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear,'[1] these are sufficient proofs of its vegetation, though we discern not the manner and motion of it: so in the other, the fruits are a like manifestation of the Spirit;[2] and though it be more possible to feel ourselves grow in stature, than in the favour and grace of God, yet may we have very satisfactory evidence of our increase in both.

The first gifts I shall take notice of, are the degrees of illuminating grace. Sometimes it is dispensed in an extraordinary manner; and this great light from heaven, like that at the conversion of St. Paul, 'shines suddenly'[3] round about the soul; but usually it is more gradual, and its first operations are less discernible: it has ordinarily its dusky twilight, its 'dawn,' and 'morning star'[4] in our hearts. It begins with dispelling our prejudices, softening and abating the rigour of them, both of those conceived against the truth, and those in favour of error; it meets us in the midst of them, as it did Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter, with a gentle expostulation, 'Why persecutest thou me?' So St. Augustin,[5] in relating his conversion, tells us, as the first thing observable in it, that he did not think the Christian religion so absurd, nor the principles of the Manichees so certain as he before believed; from this he proceeded to be doubtful which to embrace; and at length happily arrived at that fair, unsullied indifference

[1] Mark, iv. 26, 27, 28. [2] Gal. v. 22, 23.
[3] Acts, ix. 3. [4] 2 Pet. i. 19.
[5] In the fifth and sixth books of his Confessions.

of ceasing to be a Manichee, though yet no Christian. This grace is kindly offered to all, without their first seeking it, and, if not stubbornly resisted, will recommend us to larger vouchsafements. But if we 'choose darkness rather than light,' and wilfully extinguish these first glimpses, we then resist, and sometimes quite quench the Spirit; so that (though always present) he never more manifests himself to us. Thus the Jews resisted the Holy Ghost when they pursued their prejudices, which he offered to remove by the preaching of St. Stephen;[1] and Felix experienced this grace within himself, when he trembled at St. Paul's sermon.[2] But instead of entertaining this new unbidden guest, he discourteously put him off to a more convenient season; and though such seasons were often offered, for he 'often communed with Paul,' yet he wilfully misapplied them, and would not suffer the first sparks to kindle further, but smothered them with avarice, communing with the apostle, not for improvement in grace, but 'in hopes that money should be given him of Paul.' Not so when 'the Lord opened the heart of Lydia; she shut it not against him, but 'attended to the things which were spoken of Paul.'[3]

After that the mind is emptied of its prepossessions, it then becomes capable of being filled with the Spirit of knowledge, by the impression or communication of truth with which worldly wisdom could not have furnished it. I mean not here the first discovery of new truths to the mind by immediate revelation; for this, though eminently the work of the Spirit of Truth, belongs not to this

[1] Acts, vii. 51. [2] Acts, xxiv. 25, 26. [3] Acts, xvi. 14.

class, but to the next, that of graces given to profit others with. But I mean, that assent with which the mind embraces divine truths by whatever means presented to it, which is called faith. And this is mentioned in Scripture as a fruit or effect of the Spirit;[1] and therefore, wherever it is found, is a proof of the believer's having the Spirit; for 'none can say Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost,'[2] who is sometimes characterized by this title, 'the Spirit of faith.'[3] But all faith is not a manifestation of his Spjrit, because all faith is not his work.

There is a faith in Christ, which teaches us to believe that once there lived such a good man on earth, whom God commissioned to preach an excellent scheme of morality, which it would be of great advantage to mankind to follow; for in so doing they would recommend themselves to the favour and acceptance of God. But such a faith is not given by the Holy Ghost; for 'he in whom God dwelleth, confesseth that Jesus is the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world;'[4] but this faith confesseth not so much, and 'hereby we are taught to know the Spirit of Truth, and the spirit of error.'[5]

Another faith in Christ there is, which leads us to acknowledge him for our Saviour, and that his merits, and not our own good works, shall acquit us. But with such an acknowledgment our love of and engagements to the world are quite consistent; wherefore this faith is no proof of the Spirit, for 'the faith which is of God overcometh the world.'[6]

[1] Gal. v. 22; 1 Cor. xii. 9.
[2] 1 Cor. xii. 3.
[3] 2 Cor. iv. 13.
[4] 1 John, iv. 13, 14, 15.
[5] 1 John, iv. 6.
[6] 1 John, v. 4, 5.

A third faith there is in Christ, through which we believe that his merits render our obedience to God acceptable. This indeed may be a true faith, and yet no work of the Spirit in our hearts, but entirely an effect of human means, our natural faculties assisted with language, antiquity, MSS. criticism, and the like, without any divine aid, except the bare letter of the Revelation; and as this faith may rise out of human abilities, so may it be attended with pride in our supposed accomplishments, envy of others' superior skill, and bitter strife against those who mistake or oppose such truths; and is therefore no manifestation of that Spirit which 'resisteth the proud,' and dispenses its 'graces' only 'to the humble:'[1] this 'wisdom descendeth not from above.'[2] But the true saving faith, at the same time that it informs the understanding, also influences the will and affections; it enlightens the eyes of the heart,[3] says the apostle; it is there, in the heart, that the Christian man believeth, and 'if thou shalt believe with thine heart, thou shalt be saved;'[4] while infidelity proceeds from an averseness of our affections, from 'an evil heart of unbelief.'[5] We must not only assent to, but be sensible of, the corruption of human nature; not only believe, but dread the punishment of sin; not only acknowledge that the merits of Christ can save us, but ardently wish and endeavour the application of them. By this we apprehend spiritual

[1] James, iv. 6. [2] James, iii. 15.

[3] Πεφωτισμένυς τὺς ὀφθαλμὺς τῆς διανοίας. Eph. i. 18. So read our printed copies; but my MS. reads as if it had been τῆς καρδίας, nor did either of the Alexandrian copies with which it was collated read otherwise; and almost all the MSS. and old commentators have καρδίας.

[4] Rom. x. 9. [5] Heb. iii. 12.

truths, which the natural man cannot receive; we expect and covet spiritual joys, of which the heart of mere man has no relish.

This illumination is progressive, 'shining more and more,'[1] and is not instantaneously darted into the soul; it is proportioned to our necessities, and not our curiosity; and in this life at best is very imperfect in us, who see not the things themselves, but their symbols and hieroglyphics, which kind of perception is necessarily attended with some ambiguity and possibility of error: wherefore pretences to infallibility are rash and groundless; for St. Paul himself assures us, that 'we now see' as by reflection, 'in a glass, darkly,'[2] or by symbols, (ἐν αἰνίγματι) and 'know only in part.' And as it has its several degrees, so also has it several names from its several effects; as it enlightens our understanding, it is called 'illumination;' as it enables us to give credit to precious promises yet only hoped for, and assent to truths not seen but revealed, it is the gift of 'faith;' as it inclines us to wish and labour after the means of our salvation, it is called the divine traction, or 'drawing of the Father.'

These generally precede those other graces which I am now going to mention, yet do not vanish when they appear, but mingle with and gain strength and improvement from them. For when we are so far illuminated as to discern our misery in good earnest, and ardently catch at, as well as sincerely acknowledge, the means of our recovery, Christ applies his merits, and our past sins are pardoned. The next work of the Spirit in our hearts is to give us a testimony of this reconciliation, and being

[1] Prov. iv. 18. [2] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

taken into the favour and family of God; giving us confidence to rely on God as our Father, wherefore he is called 'the Spirit of adoption,'[1] giving us power and boldness to cry 'Abba, Father,' and 'testifying to our own spirits that we are the children of God.' And this testimony with our spirits is the sanctification of them, the subjecting our wills and affections to his influences, acting upon us by the mediation of our own thoughts, yet discoverable to be from him, by their opposition to our natural corruption. It is by the sanctifying grace of this Spirit dwelling in us, that we are enabled to mortify the deeds of the body;[2] they that do so are led by him; and as many as are so led have thereby a testimony, that they are the sons of God. Our wills and affections had contracted, by their corruption, an enmity against God, and a love of the world and vanity: the Holy Ghost unbends this perverseness, and directs them towards heaven. The defilements of impurity, the sordidness of iniquity he purges off, enabling us 'to possess our vessels in sanctification and not in the lusts of concupiscence;'[3] and 'taught of God to love one another,' we learn 'to be quiet, to work with our own hands' for our support, 'to walk honestly,'[4] and lack nothing that belongs to another man. He not only deadens our love of the world, but quickens and points our longings towards God; he is the great object of our hearts; we fear him rather than man; we love him above all things; there is nothing upon earth that we desire in comparison of him. Our souls pant after him as our greatest good, and our hunger and

[1] Rom. viii. 15, 16.
[2] Rom. viii. 13, 14.
[3] 1 Thess. iv. 3, 4, 5.
[4] 1 Thess iv. 9, &c.

thirst is to please him and obtain his favour. This is our sanctification, and the work of the Spirit of holiness in our hearts: and such dispositions are a testimony that that Spirit dwelleth in us, and that we are the sons of God.

This wonderful change in all our faculties, as it were annihilating our former selves, and making other creatures of us than we were before, is also, at its commencement, called 'regeneration.' Not that this change is at once, or at all perfected in this world, so as that none of the dregs of our old nature and original corruption remain; our Christian course is only a 'going on'[1] to perfection, and not the arrival at it; it is the abounding 'more and more,'[2] and not a full attainment. The guilt of original corruption may be blotted out, and the punishment remitted; but the stain continues and sullies our best performances. The blood of Christ once shed did not wash it out; but the graces of the Holy Spirit repeated and continued, gradually diminish it. So that regeneration, if it be applied to the whole and entire change of a man, is a progressive state,[3] the perfection of which is in another world, the commencement and degrees in this. The commencement of it, when, instead of children of wrath, we are received into God's favour, and have the Spirit given us as a principle of new life, gradually to unfold itself hereafter, as we shall nourish and comply with it, is usually called more particularly our regeneration, as it is our being born of the Spirit,

[1] Heb. vi. 1. [2] 1 Thess. iv. 1.

[3] Incipit quidem nunc regeneratio quoad animam; sed tunc [scil. in resurrectione] quoad corpus perficietur.—"Regeneration begins now in the soul; but then [i. e. in the resurrection,] it will be completed in the body."—Pet. Martyr in 4 Reg. iv.

and is the first beginning of a new and spiritual life. The degrees of it, our growth in grace, and progress towards a perfect change of nature, as it is the daily alteration and improvement of our minds, is generally distinguished by the name of 'renovation,' inducing by degrees a new form into the mind, and 'renewing the inward man day by day.'[1] Sometimes indeed renovation is used for the new birth as Heb. iv. 6, 'It is impossible to renew them again to repentance,' or there is no second baptism for them, because the first degree of our renovation begins at and with our regeneration: and therefore baptism is equally assigned as the cause of each;[2] 'the washing of regeneration of the Holy Ghost.'[3] But both in the Scriptures (except one text[4] may bear a doubt) and in the writings of the fathers, as far as I have been able to observe, regeneration means our being born again into God's family, and receiving in the graces of the Holy Ghost a principle of new life, which is at baptism;[5] and reno-

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 16.

[2] Accordingly Greg. Nyssen calls it *ἀνακαινισμȢ ϗ ἀναγεννήσεως αἰτία*. Orat. de Baptist.

[3] Tit. iii. 5. [4] Matt. xix. 28.

[5] Wherefore Justin Martyr, Apol. i. edit. Thirlb. p. 89. describing the baptism of converts, says, *῎Επειτα ἄγονται ὑφ' ἡμῶν ἔνθα ὕδωρ ἐϛὶ, ϗ τρόπον ἀναγεννήσεως ὃν ϗ ἡμεῖς αὐτοὶ ἀναγεννήθημεν, ἀναγεννῶνται.*—"They are then brought to us where there is water, and receive regeneration as we ourselves have received it." And Chrysostom gives this reason, *῞Ωσπερ γὰρ ὁ ἀνιϛάμενος μετὰ τὸν θάνατον αὖθεις γενέσθαι δοκεῖ, ὅτως ὁ ἐν τῷ βαπτίσματι ἀναγεννώμενος, ὥσπερ ἀναποθανῶν πρότερον τῷ ὕδατι ὅτως ἐκεῖθεν τῇ δυνάμει τȢ πνεύματος ἀνιϛάμενος, ἀναγεννᾶσθαι λέγεται.*—"That as he, who having been dead is restored to life again, seems to be a second time born; so he that is born again in baptism, having first died as it were in the water, and being thence raised to life by the power of the Spirit, is said to be regenerated."

vation is the gradual new formation of the mind, wrought by the continued presence and operation of the Holy Ghost, and not an instantaneous creation. And I think all saving grace attainable in this life is comprehended under these two general heads—illumination, or believing with the heart, and sanctification of the Spirit to obedience; and so St. Paul sums it up, ascribing the salvation of the Thessalonians to sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.[1] Particular applications of one or other of these graces have particular names assigned: as it excites us, contrary to the natural man, to pray for spiritual rather than temporal blessings, and that too with a warmth and fervour of devotion, which reaching after things not seen nor distinctly apprehended, flames out beyond the bounds of language, in aspirations that cannot be expressed, it is called the 'Spirit of prayer and supplication:'[2] as he spurs us on when we are sluggish in our course, and are apt to loiter among the amusements of the world, and draw back in cases of difficulty and distress, his work in our hearts is called 'quickening' and 'exciting grace;'[3] as he enables us to bear afflictions, and not bear them only, but choose them;[4] nay, not choose them only but enjoy them—this is owing to his supporting grace,[5] by which 'he fills us with all joy and

Cat. in Joh. iii. , Which therefore holds as well with regard to infants as adults, as we learn from Irenæus, lib. ii. c. 39. Omnes enim venit [Christus] per semetipsum salvare: omnes, inquam, qui per eum renascuntur in Deum; infantes et parvulos, &c. This was the sense and language of the universal church, as well Eastern as Western.

[1] 2 Thess. ii. 13. [2] Rom. viii. 26.
[3] 2 Cor. iv. 7, 8, 9. [4] 2 Cor. xii. 10. [5] Rom. v. 3.

peace in believing, makes us abound in hope through his power,'[1] 'and to walk in his comfort.'[2]

But it is the poor man's privilege to count his treasure; the Holy Ghost is shed 'abundantly' upon us, and it is impossible to number the drops of this plentiful effusion, or distinguish them severally which imperceptibly run into one another. Our occasions and necessities may call the application of it differently, as shores give names to the seas that wash them, which yet are indistinguishable parts of the same ocean. But we cannot say, here begins and here ends such and such a grace. They are to mend and alter our nature, and therefore mingle with it. We cannot see the insinuation, but may discern the change when wrought; the stream may discover a new tincture, and a sweeter taste; that new tincture and sweeter taste are manifestations of an infusion; but neither eye, or palate, or any of our senses can unbind the texture, and say, this is nature, and this is grace. This new formation is wrought by as secret and undiscernible an operation as the 'growth of the bones in the womb of her that is with child;'[3] such is the way of the Spirit, which is not to be traced, the working of God is not to be perceived. The divine Author and his operation are hidden from us, but his work is manifest. And though we cannot see God at any time, or feel the motion of the Spirit in our hearts, yet is there certain evidence whether we have received him or not. St. John gives us an infallible rule, 'We know that God (by his Spirit) dwelleth in us, if we keep his commandments.'[4]

[1] Rom. xv. 13. [2] Acts, ix. 31.
[3] Eccles. xi. 5. [4] 1 John, iii. 24.

II. But besides the grace given us by the Holy Ghost for our own personal advantage, the salvation of our souls, called therefore saving grace, he vouchsafes grace of another kind to some few for the advantage of many others, which may be called ministering grace, as a means of leading others to salvation. For this purpose, they have the favour of being made the instruments of conveying illuminating and sanctifying grace to others. This favour then or grace must consist in a designation and appointment to convey it, and in an ability to execute such commission. Of the former speaks St. Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians: 'Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.'[1] And he exhorts Timothy, 'Stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.'[2] Wherefore by a common metonomy, which calls the gift by the name of the giver, the Holy Ghost is said to be given or received, when this grace is given or received at ordination. And of both of these, viz. appointment and ability, St. Paul speaks: 'By the grace of God I am what I am,' that is, an apostle; 'and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain:' this was the grace of ability; for, as he proceeds, 'I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the Grace of God that was in me.'[3]

When it pleased God to give an extraordinary commission, he also gave sufficient, and that often required extraordinary abilities for the discharge of

[1] Ephes. iii. 8. [2] 2 Tim. i. 6.
[3] 1 Cor. xv. 10.

it. Thus when the world was to be enlightened by any new discoveries, the grace of faith in them was conveyed by hearing those who were sent to instruct them; and to these instructors the truths were extraordinarily revealed by inspiration, in dreams, or visions; as we see in the days preceding the Mosaic dispensation. And when Moses was appointed to be a means of conveying grace to the people of Israel, he was extraordinarily enabled for the office by large effusions of God's Spirit upon him: but when his will was known to be revealed and committed to writing, the illuminating the Jews by the publication of it afterwards, and sanctifying them by typical sacrifices, was entrusted to the tribe of Levi by an ordinary commission, and the discharge of it required not more than ordinary abilities. To this the sons of Levi succeeded by a general covenant and appointment, not by an immediate commission to every individual. They were to instruct the people, and turn them from their iniquities; 'their lips were to keep knowledge,'[1] not because inspired with greater abilities than their brethren, but as the appointed publishers of the law before revealed, 'and the people were to seek it at their mouths.' They were called holy, not from any sanctity infused, but as set apart 'to minister the daily sacrifice,' and 'to bless in the name of the Lord,'[2] and were therefore the 'messengers of the Lord of Hosts.'[3]

But an ordinary commission, which required no more than ordinary abilities to support it, lay open to promiscuous claim and pretence: men otherwise distinguished by their power, or superior en-

[1] Malach. ii. 6, 7. [2] Deut. x. 8. [3] Malach. ii. 7.

dowments of nature, if they were 'princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, and men of renown,'[1] would be prone to be buoyed up with a self-sufficiency; and think (if inferior Levites) that they were at least equal to the sons of Aaron, who, in pretending to limit their ministry, 'took too much upon them;'[2] or (if of the other tribes) that the privilege of serving at the altar did equally belong to them, 'seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them.'[3] But though the rivers of 'Damascus be better than all the waters of Israel,'[4] yet Jordan only had virtue to cleanse the leper; and God has been pleased by a signal and miraculous punishment of such vain and rash pretenders, to vindicate that commission which it was not necessary always to support by miraculous gifts and endowments. However, when extraordinary occasions required, he was not wanting to his church, raising up prophets with particular commissions, and enlightened with particular revelations.

At length, when the scope and period of all their prophecies were come, he, who was singularly and eminently 'that prophet that should come into the world,'[5] to give the last instructions to mankind, when further vision and prophecy was to cease, received his extraordinary power to reveal the whole counsel of God, at his miraculous conception by the Holy Ghost in the Virgin's womb; and though so supernaturally assisted, entered not upon the discharge of his office till particularly appointed to it by the visible descent of the Holy Ghost at

[1] Numb. xvi. 2. [2] Ibid. xvi. 3. [3] Ibid.
[4] 2 Kings, v. 12, 14. [5] John, vi. 14.

his baptism, and especial designation by the voice from heaven. He, 'having all power both in heaven (to bestow spiritual gifts from thence) and on earth,' (to dispense them to whom he pleased there,) gave commission to eleven particularly out of his disciples, who should go and teach all nations, be the means of conveying faith amongst them in illuminating grace; and both regenerate and renovate them with 'sanctifying grace, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and teaching them to observe whatever he commanded.'[1]

This was their commission, which preceded their abilities to discharge it: for, alas! what were they? 1. Mere men. How then was it possible for them 'to declare all the counsel of God?'[2] But for this purpose they were promised 'the Spirit of truth, who should lead them into all truth.'[3] 2. They were men of ordinary capacities, understanding but little of what their Saviour said to them, and therefore ill qualified to repeat after him; but, to remedy this, the same Spirit 'was to bring to their remembrance whatever he had told them.'[4] 3. They were men of low attainments, knew little more than their mother-tongue; how should these teach all nations? To enable them for this part of their office, the same Spirit 'gave them utterance to speak with other tongues.'[5] 4. They were men of the lowest condition, and little conversant with the world; how should they address kings, dispute with philosophers, plead the cause of Christ, and support it against the frowns and subtlety of its ene-

[1] Matt. xxviii. 18, 19, 20. [2] Acts, xx. 27.
[3] John, xvi. 13. [4] Ibid. xiv. 26. [5] Acts, ii. 4.

mies? For this end they had 'a mouth and wisdom given them, which all their adversaries should not be able to gainsay or resist;'[1] for 'not they, but the Spirit of their Father which was in them, spake.'[2] 5. But, however well they might acquit themselves in argument, how was it possible for a few fishermen to convince the world that they were commissioned by God to banish the heathen idols from all their temples, and alter the present systems of religion all over the earth? Therefore, as seals to their commission, when they went forth and preached, 'the Lord confirmed their words with signs following,'[3] 'the working of miracles being given them by the same Spirit.'[4] 6. Still were they men of timorous dispositions, of abject rather than audacious spirits; they were terrified to death at the high-priest's officers, the sturdiest of them all was confounded at the question of a young girl, and denied his Master with oaths; and all the rest forsook him: how could such discharge this hazardous employment, how encounter the fatigues and a thousand discouragements that must naturally attend them in their travels to every nation, with the additional distresses and persecutions easily to be foreseen, from the prejudices of their own people, and the rage of mankind in general, disturbed in their vices? They were, therefore, supernaturally endued with 'a Spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind,'[5] that they might 'not be ashamed to bear testimony of the Lord,'[6] which they did after they had received the 'Holy Ghost, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his

[1] Luke, xxi. 15. [2] Matt. x. 20. [3] Mark, xvi. 20.
[4] 1 Cor. xii. 10, 11. [5] 2 Tim. i. 7. [6] Ibid. i. 8.

name,'[1] 'and endured the afflictions of the gospel, according as they were enabled by the Holy Ghost.'[2] Lastly, they were not only infirm men, but had been wicked men, as they abundantly testify of themselves; and even but just before, one of their college had betrayed his Master for gold, and hanged himself;[3] the others were selfish enough to prefer their own safety to his honour;[4] and all seemed very little spiritualized before the Holy Ghost came upon them, hankering after a restoring the kingdom again to Israel.[5] How should these men convey to others that faith and those graces which themselves seemed to want? But our Saviour, when he appointed the ministry of grace, promised to make it effectual, that he would concur with, and 'assist it to the end of the world.'[6] When they baptized with water, he would baptize with the Holy Ghost; when they dispensed bread and wine, he would give his body and blood; when Paul planted and when Apollos watered, he would give the increase. The truth of which promise appeared in the miraculous conversion of the Gentile world by the ministry of the apostles.

But, where are these signs confirming the mission now? Where these revelations, visions, inspirations, gifts of tongues, to qualify the ministers of grace for the discharge of it? How differ their present commission, and the vouchsafement of abilities, from those given to the apostles? Our Saviour gave forth but one commission; and to whom he

[1] Acts, v. 41.

[2] 2 Tim. i. 8. *Κατὰ δύναμιν* Θεȣ̃. The Holy Ghost is *δύναμις ὑψίϛȣ*, and *δύναμις ἐξ ὕψȣς*. Luke, i. 25; xxiv. 49.

Matt. xxvii. 3, 5. [4] Ibid. xxvi. 56. [5] Acts, i. 6.

Matt. xxviii. 20.

gave it, to them he also gave the promise of assistance, in suitable abilities: this was not to the apostles only, but to the apostles and their successors, because the promise was made to reach to them, even to the end of the world; and, if the promise, so likewise the commission. As therefore, Christ chose some whom he appointed to this work, and left it not the common privilege and claim of all; so they also had power to commission whom they thought proper, and not give the same authority to all; they accordingly 'chose some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some teachers and pastors; for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the church of God.'[1] The commission which they delivered was that which they received; ours therefore, as theirs was, is of universal extent, to go and make disciples in every nation, to baptize and teach them whatever Christ commanded.

But, what was general in the grant must be restrained in the exercise: at first, by the immediate guidance of the Holy Ghost, directing them where to go and where to continue, none went into every nation, though all had power to do so. Since that, the governors of the Christian church acting under the influences of the same Spirit, limit the exercise of our ministry as shall best provide for the edification of all; that the salvation of all may be conducted with effect, and without confusion.

The promise of sufficient assistance is likewise made as well to the successors as to the apostles themselves. He concurs with the ministry always, even to the end of the world, to make it effectual, which must vary as the circumstances and necessi-

[1] Eph. iv. 11, 12.

ties of times and seasons vary. The miracles necessary to prove the Divine mission at first, and the authority of the apostles to send others with like powers, now cease; for our commission being the same with theirs, was proved by the miracles which proved theirs. The immediate revelations and inspirations then necessary are now useless, when the canon of Scripture is perfected; since which time, 'if any man, or angel from heaven, preach any other gospel,'[1] it is not to be received. The true sense of what is already revealed, and the genuine deductions from that, is the light which we are to communicate to the world, to beget a saving faith in them. The necessity of 'speaking with many tongues' is now superseded, when to men of all nations and languages is the word of reconciliation entrusted.

The abilities now required are,

1. A knowledge of the truths which we are to teach; for which, as human means, with the Divine assistance concurring, are sufficient, supernatural, without our own endeavours, are not wantonly to be expected. God's providence supports us,[2] but our hands must labour:[3] his Spirit enlightens us,[4] but we must give attendance to reading,[5] meditating,[6] and searching the Scriptures,[7] use all human aids and endeavours to open their true sense. Though Paul was miraculously conducted by God's good providence, yet he forgot not to write for his cloak at Troas; and, though immediately assisted by visions and revelations, yet was he earnest for

[1] Gal. i. 9. [2] Matt. vi. 25—34; 1 Pet. v. 7.
[3] 1 Thess. iv. 11; 2 Thess. iii. 10.
[4] Jam. i. 5; Luke, xi. 13. [5] 1 Tim. iv. 13.
[6] Ibid. verse 15. [7] John, v. 39.

the books and parchments which he left with Carpus.[1] Study, language, and sciences are required to guard against ignorance; an impartial care to prevent the errors which proceed from prejudice, vanity, or contention; and God's grace to bless the means used, not to the satisfying our curiosity or ambition, but for the sufficient discharge of the duty to which we respectively are called.

2. A diligence in us to apply the means of saving grace to others in dispensing God's word and sacraments; and God will bless the means so used to the worthy receivers of it, whatever our own unworthiness may be. For it is not our gift, but God's, and he may use what instruments he pleases for the conveying it; for he 'that watereth is nothing,' and 'he that planteth is nothing,' but 'God is all in all who giveth the increase.'[2] We may be cast away, as well as the water of the font, after having happily served to bring others to Christ; and may perish like many in the flood, after having been employed in building an ark, in which others shall escape. An apostle we know proved a traitor; and Paul's fellow-labourer, Demas, deserted his charge, out of love to this world:[3] yet we hear of no doubt made about the efficacy of their ministry,[4] and questionless many were baptized by each of them.

[1] Tit. iv. 13. [2] 1 Cor. iii. 7. [3] Tit. iv. 10.

[4] Cum tantum distaret inter Petrum et Judam, nihil tamen distabat inter baptismum qui dabatur per Petrum, et qui dabatur per Judam. Illud enim quod per eos dabatur, unum erat, cum ipsi non essent unum.—"Though there was so great a difference between Peter and Judas, yet there was no difference between the baptism which Peter administered, and that which Judas administered: their ministration was one, although they were not one."—Aug. de Unit. Eccles. p. 177.

3. Power to obtain victory to the Christian cause in general. The Holy Ghost is a paraclete or advocate, to plead the cause we undertake, and give it success. But this is no promise of safety and deliverance to our persons; ministering grace is not given for our profit, but the profit of others. But, suitably to the exigences and occasion, we may depend upon sufficient strength to support us under trials; (if that be most expedient for the general good;) or else to be more than conquerors even in our deaths; and our blood shed in testimony of the gospel shall become the seed of the church, and procure to it a plentiful increase.

Whatever changes or chances may happen through the divine appointment or permission in this mortal life, may 'the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ'[1] enable us to recommend ourselves, and those committed to our charge, to the love of God, through the fellowship of the Holy Ghost communicating with every one of us!

[1] 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

SERMON IV.

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST DISTINGUISHED FROM COUNTERFEITS.

BY DR. RIDLEY.

SERMON IV.

ACTS, XIX. 2.

Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?

THE divinity of the Holy Ghost being proved, his omnipresence forbids us to understand the question in the text of his person; for that being every where, it is impossible not to be received by any; but of some manifestation of his presence by his gifts or graces. In order to judge whether we have so received him or not, I endeavoured in the last discourse to discover those gifts, whether of 'saving' or 'ministering grace,' which are a manifestation of the Spirit; and proceed now, as I then proposed, to distinguish them from mistaken or counterfeit proofs.

I. As they are gifts, our first care must be to distinguish them from any thing of our own: wherefore 'ministering grace' consists not in a self-appointment and designation; for 'no man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God,'[1] as Aaron and his sons were under the

[1] Heb. v. 4, 5.

Old Testament; and in the New, even 'Christ glorified not himself,' but was authorized by the Father, when the voice from heaven ordained him to the work; which grace he gave to the apostles, and they to their successors, and these deliver what they have received from one to another to the end of time. So that a promiscuous ministry, and intrusion into it without call or mission, is a sacrilegious attempt on the grace of God, but is no gift of the Holy Ghost. So again, illuminating grace consists not in the assent we give to the history of the gospel, as a narration of matters of fact sufficiently supported by human evidence: for this may be purely the effect of our study and learning; the collating copies, consulting history, comparing the assertions of friends and the concessions of enemies, may necessitate such a belief: a faith which the devils may have, and doubtless have it.[1] It is an acquisition of our own, and not a gift. In like manner, sanctifying grace must not be confounded with that Pagan morality, which was the result of excellent endowments, teaching them to discern the beauty or convenience of social duties; or which public utility recommended to their practice, or a particular temper of mind or body inclining them to perform many amiable actions; or the motives of fear, vanity, emulation, and the like, inducing even virtuous habits. So far as the Gentiles did 'by nature' the things contained in the law, their 'reasonings'[2] among one another, condemning or approving such and such facts, so far this morality stands distinguished from grace, as an ability brought with us into the world, and

[1] James, ii. 19. [2] Λογισμοὶ, Rom. ii. 15.

no foreign or adventitious gift. A gift indeed we must acknowledge it to be; for what have we which we did not first receive? Our very being is the gift of God; and that we differ from one another by more excellent endowments of mind, this is questionless the favour and grace of God to us.[1] Grace we acknowledge it, and the Pelagians for a long time would acknowledge no other, and contended that this was the grace so much talked of in the gospels. But we must consider not only that it is a gift; but,

II. Who is the giver of it? It is the gift of the Holy Ghost. Indeed as God and Creator, he may most truly be said to be the giver both of ourselves and of our faculties; for the persons of the Trinity, though they be distinguished inwardly with respect to one another, yet outwardly they are undivided, and concur all in every act. Nevertheless, for our easier conception, they are usually considered as particularly authors of such outward acts as seem more immediately to flow from their personal characters.[2] The Father is the fountain of being; creation therefore is more emi-

[1] Quum omnes in Adamo peccarint ex æquo, non potest a natura sed a gratia Dei tantum proficisci, ut unus sit altero præstantioris ingenii.—"Since all alike have sinned, it cannot proceed from nature, but from the divine grace alone, that one man is better disposed than another." Aug. contra Jul. lib. iv. c. 7.

[2] Quia sumus ad Patrem proprie referri videtur, in quo, sicut apostolus dicit, vivimus, movemur, et sumus. Quod vero rationis et sapientiæ et justitiæ capaces sumus, illi specialiter qui est ratio, et sapientia, et justitia, id est Filio, deputatur. Quod autem vocati regeneramur, innovati sanctificamur, per divina eloquia personæ Spiritus Sancti evidenter adscribitur.—"That we exist, we appear to owe to the Father; in whom, says the apostle, we 'live, and move, and have our being.' That we are capable of reason, wisdom, and justice, is ascribed peculiarly to him who is reason, and wisdom, and justice—that is, to the

nently ascribed to him: the Son is the Logos, or wisdom of the Father; therefore reason and the endowments of the mind are referred to him: the Holy Ghost proceeds from both, and is the union of both; wherefore our new or spiritual birth, and the gift attending it, by which we are born of God, and are united to the Father and the Son, are called more peculiarly the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Wherefore, 1st, As the Holy Ghost is personally distinct from the Father and the Son, so we are to distinguish his gifts from the gifts of both. So that the Pelagian grace is not the grace here intended, that being the gift of the Father or the Son, and not peculiarly the gift of the Holy Ghost. And if, notwithstanding his inexplicable union and procession from the other two persons in the blessed Trinity, we are taught to consider his gifts apart, we must be still more careful to distinguish them from such as flow from causes quite alien to him. Such are,

2dly, The operations of the unclean spirit, to which as the Holy Ghost he stands opposed. Yet these are sometimes mistaken; as we find the Jews charging our Saviour, when he cast out devils by the Spirit of God, that he was empowered so to do 'by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.'[1] And on the contrary, the works of this impure fiend are sometimes mistaken for, or pretended to be, manifestations of the Holy Ghost, which is the more easily done, because he can 'transform himself into an angel of light,'[2] pretend

Son. That being called we are regenerated, being renewed we are sanctified, is clearly referred in the word of God to the person of the Holy Ghost." See Bull's Def. Fid. Nic. sect. ii. p. 228—230, from Huetius in his *Origeniana*.

[1] Matt. xii. 24, 28. [2] 2 Cor. xi. 13, 14.

zeal, and quote Scripture upon occasion.[1] So that these are not always marks of the Holy Ghost, but sometimes the cover and disguise of the evil spirit. But his characteristics are lying, calumny, and malice; and by these we shall know him.

1. His first character is, that 'he is a liar, and the father of it;'[2] therefore before we 'believe every spirit,' every teacher that pretends immediate influences from God, we are cautioned 'to try them.'[3] If he openly opposes Christ, he stands at once detected, and further trial needs not; but if he pleads commission from him, uses his style and his authority, examine whether he perverts the Scripture to recommend false doctrines and false precepts. The enemy, which sows the tares, 'is the devil;'[4] and this is usually done when we are careless, and off our guard, 'while men sleep:' too much security solicits danger, and leaves us open to assaults; we eat without fear, and, in spite of express revelation, believe we 'shall not surely die.' Let us therefore take heed of that delusive assurance, which wraps us into Paradise here, and flatters us that we are the 'born of God, and cannot sin.' St. Gregory chid a lady, who wrote to him for an assurance of her salvation, telling her that such security would make her negligent, and thereby endanger that salvation, which it vainly pretended to ascertain. Much impure heresy has spread by this means; the spotless purity of the Gnostics, incapable of stain whatever filthiness they plunged into, because they were spiritual[6]—the like impie-

[1] Matt. iv. 6, &c. [2] John, viii. 44. [3] 1 John, iv. 1.
[4] Matt. xiii. 25, 39. [5] 1 John, iii. 9.
[6] Spirituale (quod ipsi se esse volunt) ea conditione esse, ut nullo prorsus modo interitum et corruptionem recipere queat, quibuscunque tandem in flagitiis sceleribusque versetur——quo

ties in many more modern sects, affirming themselves impeccable, and refusing, as needless, to pray that their trespasses may be forgiven, though Christ commanded it, are plain proofs, whatever pretences they make to the influences and possession of the Holy Ghost, that they are of their father the devil; for in saying 'they have no sin, they deceive themselves, and the truth is not in them.'[1] So also with regard to precepts, he is no less delusive than with regard to doctrines; persuading to unnecessary trials, and unbidden severities: provoking God by drawing, as it were, upon his providence for unnecessary supplies and interpositions: throwing themselves without call upon dangers, needlessly, in confidence of God's miraculous protection to such favourites. If a Son of God, 'then cast thyself down a precipice; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee.'[2] But we know from whom such suggestions come, though Scripture be produced for the warrant. In like manner he tempts to make as bold demands on grace, as on providence, by aiming at too great austerities, which being unnecessary are not re-

etiam sit, ut eorum perfectissimi omnia ea quæ legis interdicto prohibentur, sine ullo metu perpetrant. "That the spiritual (which they pretend themselves to be) is of such a nature, that it can by no means be subject to death or corruption, with whatever wickedness it be familiar —— hence it happens, that the best of them commit without the least reluctance all those things which are forbidden by the law."—Irenæus, lib. i. c. 1. of the Gnostics. And the Jovinians taught, as St. Austin informs us, non posse peccare hominem, aut a diabolo subverti, lavacro regenerationis plena fide accepto. "That a man cannot sin, or be overcome by the devil, when once he has received with entire faith the washing of regeneration." The like opinions were since adopted by the Anabaptists, Brownists, Familists, Antinomians, &c.

[1] 1 John, i. 18. [2] Matt. iv. 6.

quired; and being not required, we are not promised assistance sufficient to perform them; by which means they prove, instead of curbs to vice, but snares and toils to virtue. It is easy to learn what hypocrisies and impieties such pretences have led many into among the disciples of Saturninus in the apostolic age, the Montanists and Marcionists soon after, and the Papists since; especially with regard to their clergy. 'Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving.'[1] These, however represented as the dictates of the Holy Ghost, the really inspired apostle tells us, proceed not from the Spirit of truth, but of error; and are 'doctrines of devils.'[2] The true distinction is, the Holy Ghost forbids the abuse, and the devil the use of these things.

2. His second character is that of calumniator, from whence he is called Satan, the adversary, and accuser: which he does, either by calumniating God to us; as he did in his first attempt on human kind, by representing him an enemy to our happiness, and designing against it: we therefore know whose revelations they are, which, contrary to Scripture, paint God a respecter of persons, and decreeing by an arbitary will the eternal destruction of some particular men. Or else he calumniates man to God; hales the Christian brethren into judgment, summons them before the tribunal, and falsely accuses and misrepresents their actions there. 'Does Job fear God for nought?'[3] was his old suggestion to discredit religion in the Gentile

[1] 1 Tim. iv. 3. [2] Ibid, iv. 1.
[3] Job, i. 9.

world. In like manner he opposed the service of God among the Jews, by standing at 'Joshua's right hand before the Lord, to accuse or implead the body of Jews;'[1] and the body of Christians are not less the object of his malicious calumnies; these he 'accuses day and night before God:'[2] but good spirits 'bring not railing accusations.' Or, lastly, he calumniates on earth,' as Christians in general, so particularly those by whose means Christians were intended to be increased; endeavouring to render their ministry ineffectual, by making them odious to those who should receive benefit from them. What abominable impieties were injuriously cast upon the primitive Christians! Murders, incests, revellings, and promiscuous lusts.[3] Their successors have met with the like treatment through all ages since, from heretics and schismatics. But general charges, not known to be true, and particular ones known to be false; misrepresentations, aggravations, equivocations, and the like, cannot proceed from the spirit of love, which teaches us to 'hope all things, believe all things'[4] on the favourable side. Great honour for Christ may be pretended: we know the kiss and Hail Master![5]' were consistent with a design, nay were the means proposed, to restrain and put an end to his ministry upon earth. And we know too from whom it proceeded; from Judas, after the devil was entered into him. But accuser is the characteristic of this spirit, and advocate that of the Holy Ghost.

[1] Zech. iii. 1. [2] Rev. xii. 10.
[3] As may be seen in the apologies of the primitive Christians.
[4] 1 Cor. xiii. 7. [5] Matt. xxvi. 49.

3. His third character is allied to this: 'He was a murderer from the beginning.'[1] This spirit persecuted the first Christians with great variety of torments, and continues to do so among some that call themselves Christians. To what cruelties has a diabolical inspiration hurried men! teaching them to enjoy the agonies of their fellow-creatures, and feast with devils upon human sacrifices; and then assume merit, and challenge a reward from heaven, as having 'done God service;'[2] blasphemously ascribing their malice to the influences of the Holy Spirit. Influenced by a spirit we allow them to be; but St. John tells us, that 'the spirit which moves us to slay our brother, is the wicked one.'[3] But,

3dly, Grace, as a gift of the Holy Ghost, is not only to be distinguished from the suggestions of the evil spirit, but also from the workings of our own spirits. Such as a vain pride, catching at applause rather than salvation, and the praise of men more than the favour of God. This turns pulpits into oratories, and the Christian course into an Olympic game: preachers become rhetoricians, aiming at their own glory rather than the profit of their hearers; and Christians, wishing more to be seen of men than to see God, become hypocrites, moralists, or men of honour. But the preaching which is under the conduct of the Spirit, applies not to the ear, but addresses to the heart; aims not to please by 'enticing words of man's wisdom,'[4] fanning them with a wind that blows from Mars's hill, the principle of human policy;

[1] John, viii. 44. [2] John, xvi. 2.
[3] 1 John, iii. 12. [4] 1 Cor. ii. 4, 13.

or that gathered in the porticos of philosophy, lectures of mere morality; but labours at convincing them by a 'demonstration of the Spirit and power,' opening the economy of grace, where prophecy ushers in the gospel revelation, and miracles supported it when revealed. And in the Christian life, grace is given to the humble, but 'God resisteth the proud,'[1] who vainly lives by comparison, and 'thanks God that he is not as other men are.'[2]

Another effect of our spirit is envy; for 'the spirit that is within us lusteth to envy,'[3] says St. James. From this spirit it is, that the younger disdain to submit themselves to the elder; but 'loving pre-eminence, prate against them with malicious words,'[4] 'are murmurers, complainers, separating themselves.' St. Jude informs us, these 'are sensual, having not the Spirit.'[5] Their leaders may preach Christ, indeed, but while they preach him of contention, they have not his Spirit; their followers, to distinguish themselves from the 'one fold' and 'one shepherd,' where they fear being unregarded in the multitude, break into factions, and list under new names, as if Christ was divided; boasting one against another, 'I am of Cephas, I am of Apollos, I am of Paul.'[6] But Paul scorned to lend his name to countenance such divisions. They call it zeal, and with great propriety St. Paul calls it so too; and assures them, that such zeal is a proof of their being mere men, not assisted with the Spirit of God.[7]

Other workings of our own spirit are avarice

[1] James, iv. 6. [2] Luke, xviii. 11. [3] James, iv. 5.
[4] 3 John, 9. [5] Jude, xvi. 19.
[6] 1 Cor. i. 12; iii. 4. [7] Ib. iii. 3.

and ambition. In vain do we pretend to be inspired with a love and honour for that Deity which all Asia and the world worshippeth, if it proceed from no higher a motive than a concern, among men of like occupation, for 'that craft by which we have our wealth.'[1] We may build temples, but if it be only 'to make us a name;'[2] or if we are so peaceable as to yield up Christ to the multitude against conviction, only lest we should be represented as 'no friend to Cæsar;'[3] how strong soever the gust may be, it is our own faults if we mistake it: the vane that shows us the direction and tendency of it, points out to us, at the same time, the quarter from whence it blows; and manifests it to be the 'spirit of the world,'[4] and not the Spirit which is of God.

But the Holy Ghost is not only, as holy, distinguished from the diabolical, or our own corrupt spirit, but,

4thly. As a Spirit opposed to flesh; and therefore his revelations must not be confounded with 'those of flesh and blood,'[5] nor mistaken for humour, how strong soever the operation may be from constitution, or however heightened from distemper, or external natural incentives. In the former instance, the spring is so open, to a man's self at least, if not to others, that it is scarce possible to be deceived, unless we will. But here, though the causes are so contrary, yet people have always been more apt to be mispersuaded about the effects. Before, different effects lead us to discover different spirits; but a difficulty here rises,

[1] Acts, xix. 25. [2] Genesis, xi. 4. [3] John, xix. 12.
[4] 1 Cor. ii. 12. [5] Matt. xvi. 17.

because the real effects of humour and distempers are like some circumstances that have frequently attended divine communications: and as this has proved sometimes a mistake, and sometimes an imposition, productive of many mischievous consequences in all ages, it deserves a more careful examination.

When God vouchsafed to speak to his prophets, it was usually in dreams or visions; under which two methods the Jews include all kinds of prophecy.[1] Vision[2] was a trance and ecstasy, in which the senses were suspended, and the vision wrought upon the fancy: the dream was looked upon as a less perfect degree, in which the senses were in some measure, though not totally suspended. The awful posture of the mind after such an honour vouchsafed it, the strong impression of the vision upon it, and the darkness which accompanied the revelation of things future and but partially shown, naturally led the speaker to deliver himself, as with an extraordinary commotion and grandeur, so also with some obscurity, arising from the very nature, as well as the remote distance of the subject spoken of. When the imagination was thus become, or believed to be, the throne of prophecy, when dreams and trances were thought its usual assistants to subdue and quell the interruption of the senses, and when a vehement and rapturous elocution was generally the manner in which they disburdened themselves of their prophecies; no wonder that those who had

[1] In istis, somno inquam et visione, continentur omnes prophetiæ gradus. "In them, i. e. in dreams and visions, are included all degrees of prophecy." Maimonides, part ii. c. 36.

[2] Instances of these ecstasies we have in Abraham, Gen. xv. 12; Eliphaz, Job. iv. 13. 14; Daniel, x. 8, and others.

over-lively imaginations from nature, or over-heated by art, soon grew into persons inspired; swoonings, vapours, hysterics, epileptics, and absence of mind were looked upon as signs of divine communication; and the rhapsodies and ravings of men beside themselves, how unintelligible or inconsistent soever, were esteemed by many as the revelations of heaven. The pagan priests and oracles appeared under the same circumstances, whether from distemper, deceit, or diabolical possession is needless to inquire here; but this introduced such confusion of judgment, as made it difficult to distinguish the true and false prophets. Disease often passed for inspiration, and a truly divine commission was treated as imposture. Thus was our blessed Saviour welcomed by the Jews, when he warmly rebuked them for their sins, and talked of another fold, which belonged to him; that he would suffer them to put him to death, and then would raise himself again to life. They looked upon such discourse as the ravings of a distempered brain, crying out, 'he hath a devil, and is mad.'[1] So also were the apostles and their little primitive church represented. The pathos and energy with which they spake in other tongues the wonderful works of God, unfolding the great mysteries of his dispensation, (τὰ μεγαλεῖα τȣ̃ Θεȣ̃,) were looked upon as unintelligible jargon, and the rants of men in their cups. 'These men,' said the hearers, 'are full of new wine.'[2] From both these narratives we may draw two useful conclusions; first, that the external show and apparatus of prophecy might be counterfeited by evil spirits, and imitated by art or nature.

[1] John, x. [2] Acts, ii.

Our Saviour never tells his objectors, though often twitted in the same manner, that it was impossible or unlikely for men possessed or distempered, to behave in such a manner. Neither did St. Peter, with the eleven, vindicate themselves and few associates, acting under the influences of the Holy Spirit, as if even what they had done was quite beyond the power of charms and potions. It was not said, what one would think might very justly have been urged, drunken men can do nothing like this: but they denied the supposition of drunkenness, because it was not yet past nine in the morning, and it was not lawful for any of them on that high day of Pentecost to taste any thing till twelve. If it was contrary to their law, of which the Jews were known to be most tenacious, for any one to taste of liquor before twelve, how improbable must it be for so many to have indulged to excess by nine? This was a fair argument to them, a just defence of Jews to Jews: but it was attended with a still stronger confutation of the scoff, when Peter, with the eleven, addressed themselves to the mockers in a language by them respectively understood, and with great aptness and perspicuity opened to them the Scriptures.

The second conclusion which we may draw is, that though there be difficulty sometimes in the appearance, yet there are rules by which we may distinguish them. But, before we consider them, let us a little more open the causes of this difficulty.

The agreeable power of imagination we experience in the works of wit and poetry; nay, every uncommon excellence in heroism or politics is referred to this source, and is a species of natural

enthusiasm, generally represented by the ancients as divine. If incentives are administered to heat the imagination, the enthusiasm rises to more extravagant degrees: thus, some owe their inspirations to wine, and others to solitude; vast and wild prospects, woods, rocks, and oceans infuse an horror and wildness into the soul, and dispose it to rapture and ecstasy. And, if to this a vehement intention of mind, or a strong obstinacy of will be added, the senses are in a great measure locked up, and the person absent from himself nor hears, nor sees, nor feels the things that are about him. Where a prevalent humour of body determines and fixes the attention perpetually on the same object, a frenzy or melancholy generally ensues, as we see in the sanguine lover, the hypochondriac devotee, the phlegmatic student, and the like: and such melancholy, as physicians inform us, is often attended with trances, and total abstraction of the senses; and the unhappy patients were thought to be divinely inspired.

St. Paul's miraculous visions, in his way to Damascus and afterwards, were probably looked upon by Festus as an epilepsy, as his preaching was taken for lunacy, which made him cry out, 'Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.'[1] And Ananias, as good a Christian as he was, would probably have conceived the same, had not a particular revelation directed him to receive this new convert.[2] Thus, the apostles looked upon the report of the women concerning their vision of the two men in shining raiment, as the effect of a distempered brain; 'their words

[1] Acts, xxvi. 24. [2] Acts, ix. 10, 13, 14, 15.

seemed to them as idle tales;'[1] for so we translate λῆρος, which the Greek physicians call a madness. What strange effects then might proceed from an unlucky concurrence of these several causes together! A warm fancy, a predominant humour, an extraordinary intenseness and obstinacy, incentives administered by a particular course of life, the mind bewildered with the most astonishing ideas in nature, and the abstrusest points in speculation! No wonder that such should think themselves extraordinarily assisted; and that others of weak judgments and little experience should think so too. There is a sympathy in nature, which makes us easily susceptible of impressions from others; the cries of distress affect us, and we feel the miseries that we see. To this oratory owes much of its magic; and, when it fascinates an audience, it is not always a proof of the power of the speaker, but often of the weakness of the hearer. The generality of men in all places deserve the character given of the Athenians by an old orator, that they heard with their eyes, and saw with their ears.[2] Gesture and commotion passed for argument, and pathetic harangues for demonstration. It would be endless and irksome to trace the history of enthusiasm through the several ages of the world. It is a savage pleasure to entertain ourselves with the varieties of human misery. But it may be useful to point at an instance or two in the Christian church, not to sport with, but to warn others of the danger.

Towards the close of the fourth century, when Julian had filled the wildernesses and mountains with monks and hermits, by banishing the Chris-

[1] Luke, xxiv. 11. [2] See Thucydides Hist. lib. iii.

tians out of his cities, a sect prevailed in Syria, called Massalians, or praying monks:[1] they comprised the life of a Christian in two duties only, to pray and to sleep. Original corruption with them was not a disease in nature, but a real possession of the devil, to the expelling of which baptism availed not, but receiving the Holy Ghost by prayer. They taught that you might know precisely the time when the evil spirit left any one, by a visible exit, and see the Holy Ghost enter in the form of fire that hurt not, and might have sensible evidence of illapses. In order to attend more uninterruptedly to his suggestions, they not only bid adieu to the world, but neglected the necessary labours for the support of life; losing themselves in the raptures of prayer, and burying themselves in sleep, for the entertainment of visions and revelations. Thus renewed by the Holy Ghost, they taught that good works could not but follow; no passions could blind or divert them from what was right; they needed no religious exercises to subdue, no instruction to direct or regulate them; gospel truths and gospel rules were unnecessary or abrogated there, where the Spirit of Truth resided, and by whose motions they were guided in all their actions, by whose assistance they were enabled to prophesy, and enjoy the presence of the ever-blessed Trinity, beholding them with their eyes.[2]

[1] They rose something earlier, probably from Hilarion, the disciple of Anthony, the celebrated monk of Egypt: which Hilarion was the founder of the hermits in Syria, who were greatly increased from the occasion here mentioned. Hilarion died a few years after Julian, aged 80; and began his monastic life at 16, in the beginning of the third century: he followed Anthony, who was a follower of Paul of Egypt, the first hermit.—Lib. vi. c. 29.

[2] See the Centur. Magdeburg. cent. 4, c. v. p. 387, where an account is given of them from Theodoret and Augustin.

We are commanded indeed to 'pray without ceasing:'[1] but if any one should adhere to the precept so strictly as to seclude himself from all company or employment, and waste himself in the fervours of devotion without intermission, till nature, oppressed and wearied, sunk into slumber, we need be but little surprised at the wildness and extravagance of his dreams, or at the strangeness of his opinions, after so fanciful a course of life. The same apostle that prescribes to 'pray without ceasing,' recommends his own example of 'labouring night and day;'[2] and a good consistent Christian will endeavour to reconcile both, by neglecting neither. The spirit of prayer and supplication is one of the valuable gifts of the Holy Ghost; but all prayer and supplication is not so; for false gods were prayed to, as well as the true: and our Saviour cautions us against extravagance in them by using 'long prayers, and making vain repetitions.'[3] We have many instances of persons who have been ardent and enlarged in prayer, and yet were destitute of all true piety towards God, or humanity towards men. From the true spirit of prayer proceed those intercessions only, which are according to the will of God; decent addresses which regard the Majesty of heaven, and our own unworthiness, and suited to our wants and situations.

Ecstatic raptures and dreams of union with God (further than that mystical union which all must enjoy with God and one another, who are baptized into and partake of his one Spirit) are no signs of being under the influences of the Holy Ghost.

[1] 1 Thess. v. 17. [2] Ib. ii. 9. [3] Matt. vi. 7.

Christians may have them, for they are men; and for the same reason heathens may have them too. Fevers and frenzies are the common infirmities of human nature, and not the peculiar privileges of Christians. Thus we read of contemplative Christians, "who were ravished out of themselves, and translated into the Deity."——But I have not enough of their humour to do justice to their sentiments; nor is my mind so enraptured as theirs, which they tell us, "Miro et incognito modo a Deo rapitur, a Deo, et in Deo suscipitur, tota Deo plena fit, tota in Deum transfunditur, ita ut essentia Dei ejus essentiæ et substantiæ intime et absque ullo modo creato uniatur."[1] If we would have it construed with exactness, we must apply to those who are able to preserve the spirit of the original by partaking of it. The Familists hit it off with great conciseness, when they talk of their illuminated elders being godded with God. Such notions were unknown in the church till the sixth century, and were then borrowed not from Scripture, but Pagan theology. The Platonists were full of those ecstasies, boasting of their being united to God, and (as they expressed it) of joining their centre with the centre of the universe. From them the less cautious Christians drew these notions and expressions, which were the extravagance of Paganism, not the sobriety of the gospel.

But I hasten to my second conclusion, and observe from the above-mentioned instances, that there are rules to be gathered from them, by which we may distinguish betwixt true inspiration and illu-

[1] Carolus Hortensius, in his Comment on a Treatise of the Mystic Theology ascribed to Dionysius Areopag. See Casaubon on Enthusiasm, p. 113.

sion. We may observe, 1. That the truth of any extraordinary mission must rest on the promise of former prophecies. When any one challenges to be heard as coming from God extraordinarily, and it shall be objected to him, that his ecstasies are the effects of natural means, that he is full of new wine, or else intoxicated with his own humour, and 'drunken, though not with wine;'[1] if what he asserts be true, he can produce his credentials.* St. Peter and the infant church cry out, 'This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.'[2] It is true, impostors are usually very full of Scripture, and can apply with great volubility: St. Peter says, this is the very thing foretold; and then produces the prophecy, and proves the particular completion of it at that time, by the marks and signs which were to ascertain the precise time of its being fulfilled.

The claims of prophets must be supported by miracles. When our Saviour was called by some a madman, or one possessed, others recurred to his works as his proper vouchers: 'Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?'[3] Upon which fact they argued in the same manner before: 'How can a sinner do such miracles?'[4]

For our more security, both must concur: the claim must be drawn from former prophecies, and their interpretation of such prophecies supported by miracles. Thus our Saviour refers the Jews to their own oracles: 'Search the Scriptures; they are they which testify of me.'[5] Nor satisfied with that alone, he says, 'The same works which I do, bear

[1] Isaiah, li. 21. [2] Acts, ii. 16. [3] John, x. 21.
[4] John, ix. 16. [5] John, v. 39.

witness of me.'[1] So when John sent to know if Christ was He, the person foretold, he bids him compare the prophecy and completion. 'Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear,'[2] &c. These were the things foretold as the marks of the Messias; these things you hear and see performed by me. He approved himself to be the prophet that should come, or was promised, by appeals to Scripture, which particularly pointed him out, 'and by miracles, and wonders, and signs, done in the midst of them.'[3] So we find that his disciples could not only say in their vindication, 'This is that which was spoken by the prophet,' but 'many wonders and signs also were done by the apostles.'[4] And both together were what St. Paul calls 'the demonstration of the Spirit and of power.'

As this demonstration of the Spirit and of power are the Scripture marks of ministering grace in persons sent by an extraordinary commission; so neither need we be deceived concerning saving grace in ourselves. The carnal and the spiritual man are too opposite to be mistaken. The signs are open. 'Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like,'[5] are the works of the flesh: if we relish, and indulge ourselves in any of these vices, we know

[1] John, v. 36. [2] Matt. xi. 4, 5. [3] Acts, ii. 22.
[4] Ib. verse 43. [5] Gal. v. 19, 20, 21.

we are not under the saving influences of grace. We may have received the Holy Ghost in his ordinances, we may have complied with some of his motions; but then we have resisted others, and thereby obstructed his conquest over our corruption; and while this obstinacy continues, the fire which he kindled in us gradually burns down, and if we take no care to renew it, will quite expire. It will indeed, like fading lamps, break out in one strong effort at the last, and raise our bodies from the grave, and then quite desert the soul for ever. But where his motions are cherished, the flame increases, consuming the dross which remains, and lights up all the soul with 'love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.'[1] These are the fruits, and declare the tree. Gregory, of Nazianzum describes the different states so as to give us a good rule to judge of ourselves by: "Yesterday thou wert a timeserver; to-day thou art not ashamed of thy master Christ: yesterday thou didst affect the praise of men; to-day thou settest more by an honest life; yesterday thou settest thyself up to be seen of men, to-day thou choosest retirement and divine meditations."[2] Such a change, he tells us, is a proof of our spiritual renovation. But if it be otherwise with us, and the following day find us as bad as we were the day before, we have no part in it. If

[1] Gal. v. 22, 23.

[2] Χθὲς πίϛιν εἶχες τὴν τῶν καιρῶν, σήμερον τὴν τȣ̃ Θεȣ̃ γνώριϛον· . . . . χθὲς τὸ δοκεῖν τις ἐτίμας, σήμερον τὸ εἶναι προτίμησον· . . . . χθὲς ἦσθα θεατρικὸς, σήμερον φάνηθι θεωρητικός. . . . . ἐὰν ȣ̃τω διανοῇ . . . ϗ ȣ̃τω ποιῇς, ἔϛαι σοι ὁ οὐρανὸς καινὸς, ϗ ἡ γῆ καινή.—Orat. xliii. p. 702.

we are so happy as to find the above-mentioned graces in our souls, the Spirit thus manifested will 'seal us to the day of redemption,'[1] 'quicken our mortal bodies,'[2] and reward our faithful use of his few gifts here, with plentiful effusions of glory hereafter.

[1] Ephes. iv. 30. [2] Rom. viii. 11.

SERMON V.

ON THE ASSISTANCE OF THE HOLY GHOST.

BY DR. OGDEN.

[SAMUEL OGDEN was born in 1716. He was appointed Woodwardian Professor in the University of Cambridge in 1764, and died in 1778.]

SERMON V.

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1 JOHN, III. 24.

And he that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him; and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

THE Scriptures, in many places, speak of the Holy Spirit as abiding in believers. 'But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you: now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.' 'I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth; he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.' 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? All the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.' 'Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they

are the sons of God.'[1] Sanctification is represented not as being exactly the same thing with the inhabitation of God's Spirit, but the effect of it; as being his work. 'Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' 'Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience.'[2]

Neither is it probable that the presence of the Holy Ghost thus spoken of, is to be understood of any favour peculiar to the first ages of the gospel, or confined to some few among the number of good Christians. The phrases now recited bear the face of a more extended signification, and seem to promise a general blessing.

Yet many serious persons pretend to no experience of this: and that experience which has been alleged in several ages, and particularly in our own, seems to be attended with difficulties; the proofs not altogether unexceptionable, the circumstances sometimes suspicious; to the creating of doubt and uneasiness in believers, and to the scorn of infidels.

But surely we need not be reminded, that Christians may have the assistance of the Spirit of God, without the power of working miracles. The very readiness to receive the gospel, even in the first age of it, is ascribed to his operation. 'No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.'[3] 'A great door,' says St. Paul,

[1] Rom. viii. 9; John, xiv. 16, 17; 1 Cor. iii. 16; Eph. ii. 22; John, iii. 5; Rom. viii. 14.
[2] 2 Cor. vi. 11; 1 Pet. i. 2. [3] 1 Cor. xii. 3.

'and effectual was opened unto me.'[1] It is written of Lydia, 'whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken.'[2]

Often indeed the presence of the Divine Spirit was in those days visible in miraculous works, which is not so now: nor is this altogether unaccountable. The Father of all dispenses his blessings to his children with a kind sparing liberality; never bestowing less than is necessary; seldom much more than is sufficient. In the beginning of the gospel-age, when the world was to be converted to a faith that opposed the reigning prejudices and interests of mankind, the preachers were furnished with proportionable abilities, and the 'demonstration of the Spirit was that of power.'[3] But as soon as Christianity, by these supernatural means, was spread abroad in the world, and men were disposed to receive the gospel with less aversion, the powers which were no longer necessary were no longer given. By degrees they became more rare and less distinguishable, till at last they vanished from the earth. Men may therefore now believe in Jesus, and yet not be able to 'take up serpents' or 'drink deadly poison' without danger: you may meet with pious persons, but none whose touch will heal the sick; with many whose faith, we trust, is not only 'as a grain of mustard-seed,' but strong and active, and yet, if they 'say to this mountain, be thou removed and cast into the sea,' it shall not obey them.

Christians also may have the Spirit of Christ, without being inspired with the certain knowledge

[1] 1 Cor. xvi. 9. [2] Acts, xvi. 14.
[3] 1 Cor. ii 4.

of all divine things, or with skill infallible in the interpretation of Scripture. Ignorance, doubt, and error may reside in the same breast with the fountain of all truth and light; because he pours not out the streams of his bounty without measure; but 'divideth to every man severally as he will.'[1]

The Spirit was promised to the apostles to 'teach' them 'all things,' and 'bring to their remembrance whatsoever the Saviour had said unto them;' and they laboured in the service of the gospel as they were enabled and commanded. They communicated the will of God to the world—they committed it to writing for future ages, and they sealed it with their blood.

But yet, though the substance of our duty is evident, and the heads of the divine laws written in large characters, there are still many questions, and, to appearance, considerable, which can receive no profitable answer without the utmost use of industry, and the help of learning; and, with both, no certain decision.

However the divine revelation might be imparted to the primitive teachers, their successors have it to learn by slow and uncertain methods. But the same Being who made the world, redeemed it; and can we wonder to find a resemblance in his operations? Our first parent never passed through the state of infancy; but came into the world a man. The lot of his posterity is different. We are weak and helpless in our beginning of life, and ascend by tedious and tottering steps to our limited degree of strength and of understanding.

The great apostle might boast, 'The gospel

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 11.

which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man; neither was I taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen, I conferred not with flesh and blood.' From being a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, he became at once not a whit inferior to 'the very chiefest apostles.'[1]

But we are not to measure our expectations by these great examples. It is enough that our Lord hath assuredly promised 'to be with us always even unto the end of the world; and to procure for us another Comforter, that he may abide with us for ever.'[2]

On this promise and this Comforter we still rely for such help as is still needful, though not such as we might vainly wish; acknowledging, at the same time, that we are as ignorant as we are feeble, both beset with danger and encompassed with doubt. Whoever thinks that good Christians should be exempted from error, may demand also that they should be delivered from pain, be freed from the debility of childhood, the folly of youth, the decays of age; be created complete in every power, and start up at once to the perfection of happiness.

May we not add, that good men may be led by the Spirit of God, and yet they themselves not distinguish his holy influence; and be conducted safely in the way to heaven, without discerning the very hand that guides them? How is this incredible?

Gal. i. 11, 12; 1 Tim. i, 15; 2 Cor. xi 5.
[2] Matt. xxvii 20; John, xiv. 26.

You believe, all of you, the providence of God: it is the doctrine even of natural religion. Can you distinguish between the acts of God and the course of nature? What is it that God doeth? He doth all, no doubt. He ruleth in heaven above, and in the earth beneath: but he is invisible to your eyes; nor can you certainly separate, in the transactions that lie before you, human weakness from Omnipotent power, or draw the precise line in any one event which you now see, between God and nature.

He is ever doing good, and almost ever in a manner that exceeds alike our deserts and our understanding. His heavenly hand, like the hidden spring in a machine, works unseen, yet powerfully; is little in appearance, but in effect wonderful. He delivers from dangers we never feared, bestows a thousand benefits we knew not that we wanted. 'Not a sparrow is forgotten before God: the very hairs of your head are all numbered.' In the meantime the original cause of all is undiscerned, perhaps, alas! unthought of. He 'is about my path, and about my bed.' And yet, 'Behold I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand that I cannot see him.'[1]

'So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep and rise night and day,' and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. 'For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then

[1] Psalm cxxxix. 2; Job, xxiii. 8, 9.

the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. And when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.'[1] The seed is the word of God; the heart of man is the ground into which it is cast: if this be good, doubt not the care of God; he will cause it to spring and grow up, though we know not how. His Spirit, 'which helpeth our infirmities,' will shed on it the 'sweet influences' of heaven, support and cherish our tender goodness, defend it from the insects of the earth, and the storms above. The fruit is a life of piety and faith, good works and charity, purity and patience: when this is brought forth, the sickle is in the hand of the angel of death, and the harvest is immortal glory.

It is certainly both allowable and proper to consider the most speculative points, which have any relation to religion; but our attention should be much more employed on practical subjects, and most of all on practice. If we would obey God's commandments more, we should, all of us, question his promises less; perhaps understand them better; certainly be more largely partakers of them.

There are, and will always be, innumerable things in the divine government impossible for us to comprehend; and as those which are more known to us require our thanks and praise, so the former call for other sentiments and dispositions of mind equally reasonable: admiration, submission, trust; and all conspire to demand the conformity of our lives to the will of God. In cases which we understand, we see there is great

[1] Mark, iv. 26, &c.

reason for this; and in those we do not, there may be greater.

When we read of the miracles done by the apostles, and find that, in ancient times, the blind received their sight, the deaf heard, the lepers were cleansed, the lame walked, and the very dead were raised at the speaking of a word, we are amazed at the powers bestowed on the first preachers of the gospel, and should be willing to submit to any degrees of rigour in our lives, that ourselves also, if it were now possible, might be honoured with the same signal endowments. Though we are not so wickedly foolish as to think that the gifts of God can be purchased with money, whatever could procure them we should be forward to offer; crying out, with that false convert, 'Give me also this power.'

'He that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him.'[1] Be as good men as the first preachers of Christianity, keep but with equal care the commandments of God, and the same Spirit will be, is already, in you which was also in them. You cannot work miracles; but you are as dear to your Heavenly Father as those whom he enabled to raise the dead.

Nay, more; men may work miracles in support of God's true religion, and yet be found at last to have been the servants of another master, and the preacher of righteousness be condemned for his sins. 'Many will say to me in that day, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name; and in thy name have cast out devils; and in thy name done many wonderful works? Then will I profess unto them,

[1] 1 John, iii. 24.

I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.' 'In this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven.' 'To obey is better than sacrifice:'[1] a good life is above miracles.

There will be found among the workers of wonders, among apostles, prophets, martyrs, who shall be 'cut off, and cast into outer darkness;' but of those who love God and keep his commandments, not one shall be lost. The obedient shall all be received into the state of bliss, and be made 'kings and priests to God, for ever and ever.'

[1] Matt. vii 23, 24; Luke, x. 20; 1 Sam. xv. 12.

SERMON VI.

THE NEW CREATURE.

BY DR. HAMMOND.

[Henry Hammond was born in 1605, and died in 1660.]

SERMON VI.

GAL. VI. 15.

But a new creature.

AMONGST all other encumbrances and delays in our way to heaven, there is no one that doth so clog and disadvantage us, so cast us behind in our race, as a contentedness in a formal worship of God, an acquiescence and resting satisfied in outward performances; when men, upon a confidence that they perform all that can be required of a Christian, look no further than the outward work, observe not what heart is under this outside, but resolve their estate is safe, they have as much interest in heaven as any one. Such men as these, the apostle begins to character and censure in the 12th verse of the chapter: 'As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh,' &c. They that stand only on a fair specious outside, and think all the sap and life of religion lies in the bark, they do this and this—these will have you circumcised, and constrain you to many burdensome ceremonies; measuring out religion to you by the weight,—thus much is required of you to do, (as Popish confes-

sors set their deluded votaries their task of ave-maries and paternosters by tale,) and thus you may be sure to be saved. In brief, the apostle here shows the unprofitableness of all these, and sets up the inward sanctity and renewedness of heart against them all, as the only thing that will stand us in stead, and appear to be of any weight in the balance of the sanctuary. If you observe all the commands, and submit yourselves to all the burden of both law and gospel, and bear it upon your shoulders never so valiantly—if you be content to be circumcised, as Christ was, or because he hath now abrogated that, make use of Christian liberty, and remain uncircumcised, notwithstanding all inducements to the contrary; in brief, be you outwardly never so severe a Jew or Christian, all that is nothing worth, there is but one thing most peremptorily required of you, and that you have omitted; 'for neither circumcision availeth any thing, neither uncircumcision, but a new creature.

The particle 'but,' in the front of my text, is exclusive and restrictive; it excludes every thing in the world from pretending to avail any thing, from being believed to do us any good. For, by circumcision the church of the Jews, and by uncircumcision the whole profession of Christian religion being understood, when he saith neither of these availeth any thing, he forcibly implies that all other means, all professions, all observances that men think or hope to get heaven by are to no purpose, and that by consequence it exactly restrains to the new creature; there it is to be had, and nowhere else: thus doth he slight and undervalue, and even reprobate all other ways to heaven,

that he may set the richer price, and raise a greater estimation in us of this. The substance of all the apostle's discourse, and the groundwork of mine shall be this one aphorism,—*Nothing is efficaciously available to salvation, but a renewed, regenerated heart.* For the opening of which we will examine, by way of doctrine, wherein this new creature consists; and then, by way of use, the necessity of that and unprofitableness of all other plausible pretending means: and first of the first, wherein this new creature consists.

I. It is observable, that our state of nature and sin is in Scripture expressed ordinarily by old age,[1] the natural sinful man; that is, all our natural affections that are born and grow up with us, are called 'the old man,' as if, since Adam's fall, we were decrepit and feeble, and aged as soon as born; as a child begotten by a man in a consumption never comes to the strength of a man, is always weak and crazy, and puling, hath all the imperfections and corporal infirmities of age before he is out of his infancy. And, according to this ground, the whole analogy of Scripture runs: all that is opposite to the old decrepit state, to the dotage of nature, is phrased 'new.' The 'new covenant.'[2]—the language of believers, 'new tongues.'[3]—a 'new commandment'[4]—'a new man'[5] In sum, the state of grace is expressed by πάντα καινὰ, 'all is become new.'[6] So that old and new, as it divides the Bible, the whole state of things, the world; so it doth that to which all these serve—

[1] Rom. vi. 6; Col. iii. 9; Eph. iv. 22.
[2] Heb. viii. 8, 13. [3] Mark, xvi. 17. [4] John, xiii. 34.
[5] Eph. ii. 15. [6] 2 Cor. v. 17.

man. Every natural man which hath nothing but nature in him, is an old man, be he never so young; is full of years, even before he is able to tell them. Adam was a perfect man when he was but a minute old, and all his children are old even in the cradle, nay, even dead with old age.[1] And then, consequently, every spiritual man which hath somewhat else in him than he received from Adam, he that is 'born from above,'[2] γεννήθῃ ἄνωθεν, (for it may be so rendered from the original, as well as 'born again,' as our English read it,) he that is by God's Spirit quickened from the old death,[3] he is contrary to the former, a new man, a new creature. The old eagle hath cast his beak, and is grown young; the man, when old, has entered the second time into his mother's womb, and is born again; all the grey hairs and wrinkles fall off from him, as the scales from blind Tobit's eyes; and he comes forth a refined, glorious, beauteous, new creature; you would wonder to see the change. So that you find in general, that the Scripture presumes it, that there is a renovation, a casting away of the old coat, a youth and spring again in many men from the old age and weak bed-rid estate of nature. Now, that you may conceive wherein it consists, how this new man is brought forth in us, by whom it is conceived, and in what womb it is carried, I will require no more of you than to observe and understand, with me, what is meant by the ordinary phrase in our divines, a new principle, or inward principle of life; and that you shall do briefly thus. A man's body is naturally a sluggish, unactive, motionless, heavy thing, not able to stir or

[1] Eph. ii. 5. [2] John, iii. 3. [3] Eph. ii. 5.

move the least animal motion, without a soul to enliven it; without that it is but a carcass, as you see at death; when the soul is separated from it, it returns to be but a stock or lump of flesh; the soul bestows all life and motion on it, and enables it to perform any work of nature. Again, the body and soul together, considered in relation to somewhat above their power and activity, are as impotent and motionless as the body without the soul. Set a man to remove a mountain, and he will heave, perhaps, to obey your command, but in event will do no more towards the displacing of it than a stone in the street could do; but, now let an omnipotent power be annexed to this man, let a supernatural spirit be joined to this soul, and then will it be able to overcome the proudest, stoutest difficulty in nature. You have heard, in the primitive church, of a grain of faith removing mountains; and, believe me, all miracles are not yet out-dated. The work of regeneration, the bestowing of a spiritual life on one dead in trespasses and sins, the making of a carcass walk, the natural old man to spring again, and move spiritually, is as great a miracle as that. Now the soul, in that it produces life and motion, the exercise of life in the body, is called a principle, that is, a spring or fountain of life, because all comes from it; in like manner, that which moves this soul, and enables it to do that which naturally it could not; that which gives it a new life, which before it lived not, furnisheth it with spiritual powers to quell and subdue all carnal affections which were before too hard for it; this, I say, is called properly an inward principle; and an inward, because it is inwardly and secretly infused, doth not only outwardly assist us as an auxiliary at

a dead lift, but is sown and planted in our hearts, as a soul to the soul, to elevate and enable it above itself, hath its seat and palace in the regenerate heart, and there exercises dominion, executes judgment; and that commonly, either by prison or banishment—it either fetters or else expels all insolent rebellious lusts. Now, the new principle, by which not the man, but the new man, the Christian lives, is, in a word, the Spirit of God; which unites itself to the regenerate heart, so that now he is said to be a godly man, a spiritual man, from the God, from the Spirit; as before a living reasonable man, from the soul, from the reason that informed and ruled in him; which is noted by that distinction in Scripture betwixt the regenerate and unregenerate, expressed by a natural, or animal, and a spiritual man. Those creatures that have no soul in them are called naturals, having nothing but nature within to move them; others which have a soul, animals or living creatures, by both which the unregenerate is signified indifferently, because the soul which he hath stands him in little stead, his flesh rules all; and then he is also called a carnal man; for all his soul he is but a lump of flesh; and therefore, whether you say he hath a soul, and so call him an animal, or hath not a soul, and so call him a mere natural, there is no great difference in it. But now the regenerate man which hath more than a soul—God's Spirit—to enliven him, he is of another rank; he is πνευματικὸς, a spiritual man: nay, only he is properly a Christian, because he lives by Christ, 'he lives, yet not he, but Christ liveth in him.'[1]

[1] Gal. ii. 20.

This being premised, that now you know what this new creature is, he that lives and moves by a new principle, all that is behind will be clearliest presented to you by resolving these four questions: 1. Whence it comes; 2. Where it lodges; 3. When it enters; 4. What works it performs there.

To the first, "Whence it comes," the answer is clear and punctual;[1]—ἄνωθεν, from above, from whence comes every good, and especially every perfect gift;[2] but this most peculiarly by a several and more excellent way than any thing else. Since Christ's ascension, the Holy Ghost, of all the persons in the Trinity, is most frequently employed in the work of descending from heaven; and that by way of mission from the Father and the Son, according to the promise of Christ, 'The comforter whom I will send from the Father.'[3] Now this Spirit being present every where in its essence, is said to come to us by communication of his gifts, and so to be peculiarly resident in us, as God is in the church; from which analogy our bodies are called the temples of the Holy Ghost, which is in us. 'God sends then his Spirit into our hearts;'[4] and this, as I said, by a peculiar manner; not by way of emission, as an arrow sent out of a bow, which loses its union which it had with the bow, and is now fastened in the but or white; nor properly by way of infusion, as the soul is in the body, infused from God; yet so also, that it is in a manner put into our hands, and is so in the man's possession that hath it, that it is neither in any man's else, nor yet by any extraordinary tie annexed to God from whom it came; but, by way of irradiation, as a

[1] John, iii. 3. [2] James, i. 17. [3] John, xv. 26.
[4] 1 Cor. vi. 19.

beam sent from the sun, that is in the air indeed, and that substantially, yet so as it is not separated from the sun; nay, consists only in this, that it is united to the sun; so that if it were possible for it to be cut off from the sun, it would desist to be, it would illuminate no longer. So that you must conceive these beams of God's Spirit at the same time in the Christian's heart and in the Spirit; and so uniting that Spirit to the heart, as you may conceive by this proportion. I have a javelin or spear in my hand; if I would mischief any thing, or drive it from me, I dart it out of my hand at it, from which God's judgments are compared to shooting and lightning: 'He hath bent his bow, he hath sent forth his arrows, he cast forth lightnings.'[1] But if I like any thing that I meet with, if I would have it to me, I reach out my spear, and fasten in it, but still hold the spear in my hand, and having pierced it, draw it to me. Thus doth God reach forth his graces to us, and, as I may so say, by keeping one end in his hand, and fastening the other in us, plucks and unites us to himself; from which regeneration is ordinarily called an union with Christ, and this union by a strong able band, *διὰ μείζονος ϗ κυριοτέρȣ δέσμȣ*, (in Eusebius's phrase,) which no man can cut asunder. It is impossible to divide or cut a spirit; and this bond is *δέσμος πνευματικὸς*, a spiritual one; and that made St. Paul so confident, 'that no creature should ever separate him.'[2] And this God does by way of emanation, as a loadstone sending out its magnetic atoms draws the iron to itself, which never stays till it be united. Thus do

[1] Psalm xviii. 14. [2] Rom. viii. 39.

you see from whence this principle comes to me, and in what manner, from God's Spirit, by this means uniting me to himself.

To the second question, 'Where it lodges,' my answer is, in the heart of man, in the whole soul; not in the understanding, not in the will, (a distinction of faculties invented by philosophers to puzzle and perplex divines, and put them to needless shifts,) but, I say, in the whole soul, ruling and guiding it in all its actions, enabling it to understand and will spiritually. It is conceived and born in the soul, but nursed, and fed, and increased, into a perfect stature, by the outward organs and actions of the body; for by them it begins to express and show itself in the world, by them the habit is exerted and made perfect, the seed shot up into an ear, the spring improved to autumn: when the tongue discourses, the hands act, the feet run the way of God's commandments. So, I say, the soul is the mother, and the operations of soul and body the nurse of this Spirit in us; and then who can hold in his spirit without stifling, from breaking out into that joyful acclamation, 'Blessed is the womb that bears this incarnate Spirit, and the paps that give him suck!'[1] Now this inward principle, this grace of regeneration, though it be seated in the whole soul, as it is an habit, yet as it is an operative habit, producing, or rather enabling a man to produce, several gracious works, so it is peculiarly in every part, and accordingly receives divers names according to several exercises of its power in those several parts. As the soul of man sees in the eye, hears in the ear,

[1] Luke, xi. 27.

understands in the brain, chooses and desires in the heart; and being but one soul, yet works in every room, every shop of the body, in a several trade, as it were, and is accordingly called a seeing, a hearing, a willing, or understanding soul; thus doth the habit of grace, seated in the whole, express and evidence itself peculiarly in every act of it, and is called by as several names as the reasonable soul hath distinct acts, or objects. In the understanding it is, first, spiritual wisdom, and discretion in holy things; opposite to which is νȢς ἀδόκιμος,[1] an unapproving, as well as unapproved or reprobate mind, and frequently in Scripture spiritual blindness. Then, as a branch of this, it is belief or assent to the truth of the promises, and the like. In the practical judgment it is spiritual prudence, in ordering all our holy knowledge to holy practice: in the will it is a regular choice of whatsoever may prove available to salvation, a holy love of the end, and embracing of the means with courage and zeal. Lastly, in the outward man, it is an ordering of all our actions to a blessed conformity with a sanctified soul. In brief, it is one principle within us doth every thing that is holy—believes, repents, hopes, loves, obeys. And consequently, is effectually in every part of body and soul, sanctifying it to work spiritually, as an holy instrument of a divine invisible cause; that is, the Holy Ghost that is in us and throughout us.

For the third question, 'When this new principle enters'; first, you are to know that it comes into the heart in a three-fold condition: 1, as an har-

[1] Rom. 1. 28.

binger; 2, as a private, secret guest; 3, as an inhabitant, or housekeeper.—1. As it is an harbinger, comes to fit and prepare us for itself; trims up, and sweeps, and sweetens the soul, that it may be readier to entertain him when he comes to reside; and that he doth (as the ancient gladiators had their *arma prælusoria*) by skirmishing with our corruptions before he comes to give them a pitched battle: he brandishes a flaming sword about our ears, and as by a flash of lightning, gives us a sense of a dismal hideous state; and so somewhat restrains us from excess and fury; first, by a momentary remorse, then by a more lasting, yet not purifying flame, the spirit of bondage. In sum, every check of conscience, every sigh for sin, every fear of judgment, every desire of grace, every motion or inclination toward spiritual good, be it never so short-winded, is *præludium Spiritus*, a kind of John Baptist to Christ, something that God sent before to prepare the ways of the Lord. And thus the Spirit comes very often, in every affliction, every disease, (which is part of God's discipline to keep us in some order,) in brief, at every sermon that works upon us at the hearing: then I say, the lightning flashes in our eyes, we have a glimpse of his Spirit, but cannot come to a full sight of it: and thus he appears to many, whom he will never dwell with. Unhappy men, that they cannot lay hold on him when he comes so near them! and yet somewhat more happy than they that never came within ken of him; stopped their ears when he spake to them even at this distance. Every man in the Christian church hath frequently in his life a power to partake of God's ordinary preparing graces: and it is some degree of obedience, though

no work of regeneration, to make good use of them: and if he, without the inhabitance of the Spirit, cannot make such use as he should, yet to make the best he can: and thus I say the Spirit appears to the unregenerate, almost every day of our lives. 2. When the Spirit comes a guest to lodge with us, then he is said to enter; but till by actions and frequent obliging works he makes himself known to his neighbours, as long as he keeps his chamber, till he declare himself to be there, so long he remains a private, secret guest. And that is called the introduction of the form, that makes a man to be truly regenerate, when the seed is sown in his heart, when the habit is infused; and that is done sometimes discernibly, sometimes not discernibly, but seldom, as when Saul was called in the midst of his madness,[1] he was certainly able to tell a man the very minute of his change, of his being made a new creature. Thus they which have long lived in an anti-Christian course, do many times find themselves strucken on a sudden, and are able to date their regeneration, and tell you punctually how old they are in the Spirit. Yet because there be many preparations to this Spirit, which are not this Spirit; many presumptions in our hearts false-grounded, many tremblings and jealousies in those that have it, great affinity between faith natural and spiritual: seeing it is a spirit that thus enters, and not as it did light on the disciples in a bodily shape, it is not an easy matter for any one to define the time of his conversion. Some may guess somewhat nearer than others, as remembering a sensible change in themselves; but, in a word, the

[1] Acts, ix.

surest discerning of it, is in its working, not at its entering. I may know that now I have the Spirit better than at what time I came to it. Undiscernibly God's supernatural agency interposes sometimes in the mother's womb, as in John Baptist springing in Elizabeth, at Mary's salutation,[1] and perhaps in Jeremiah, 'Before thou comest out of the womb I sanctified thee,'[2] and in Isaiah, 'The Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant.'[3] But this divine address waits most ordinarily till the time of our baptism, when the Spirit accompanying the outward sign infuses itself into their hearts, and there seats and plants itself, and grows up with the reasonable soul, keeping even their most luxuriant years within bounds; and, as they come to a use of their reason, to a more and more multiplying this habit of grace into holy spiritual acts of faith and obedience; from which it is ordinarily said, that infants baptized have habitual faith, as they may be also said to have habitual repentance, and the habits of all other graces, because they have the root and seed of those beauteous healthful flowers which will actually flourish then, when they come to years. And this, I say, is so frequent to be performed at baptism, that ordinarily it is not wrought without that means, and in those means we may expect it, as our church doth in our liturgies, where she presumes at every baptism that "it hath pleased God to regenerate the infant by his Holy Spirit." And this may prove a solemn piece of comfort to some, who suspect their state more than they need, and think it is impossible that they should be in a regenerate condition,

[1] Luke, i. 41. [2] Jer. i. 5. [3] Isaiah, xlix. 5.

because they have not as yet found any such notable change in themselves, as they see and observe in others. These men may as well be jealous they are not men, because they cannot remember when their soul came to them: if they can find the effects of spiritual life in themselves, let them call it what they will, a religious education, or a custom of well-doing, or an unacquaintedness with sin; let them comfort themselves in their estate, and be thankful to God who visited them thus betimes; let it never trouble them that they were not once as bad as other men, but rather acknowledge God's mercy, who hath prevented such a change, and by uniting them to him in the cradle, hath educated and nursed them up in familiarity with the Spirit. Lastly, the Spirit sometimes enters into our hearts upon occasional emergencies—the sense of God's judgments on ourselves or others, the reflection on his mercies, the reading good books, falling into virtuous acquaintance, but most eminently at and with the preaching of the word: and this by degrees, as it seems to us; but indeed at some one especial season or other, which yet perhaps we are not able to discern, and here indeed are we ordinarily to expect this guest if we have not yet found him: here doth it love to be cherished, and refreshed, and warmed within us, if we have it, 'for even it is the power of God unto salvation.'[1] 3. The third condition in which this Spirit comes into our hearts, is as an inhabitant, or housekeeper. The Spirit, saith Austin, "first is in us, then dwells in us: before it dwells it helps us to believe; when it dwells it helps, and perfects, and improves our

[1] Rom. i. 16.

faith, and accomplishes it with all other concomitant graces."[1] So I say here, the Spirit is then said to inhabit, and keep house in us, not as soon as it is entertained and received; but when it breaks forth into acts, and declares itself before all men; when men 'see our good works, and glorify our Father.'[2] Before, we were said to 'live in the Spirit;' now to 'walk,' as you shall see the phrases used distinctly, Gal. v. 25. To 'walk,' that is to go about conspicuously in the sight of all men, breaking forth into works, (as the sun, after the dispersions of a mist or cloud,) whereby all men see and acknowledge our faith and obedience, and find their own evil ways reprehended, and made manifest by his good, as is noted in Eph. v. 13: 'All things that are reproved are made manifest by the light.' Semblable to which is that of the atheist's repining at the godly man, 2 Wisd. ii. 14: 'He is made to reprove our thoughts.' Thus is the third query resolved also, when this inward principle enters. To the last query, 'What works it performs,' the answer shall be brief: every thing that may be called spiritual—faith, repentance, charity, hope, self-denial, and the rest; but these not promiscuously, or in a heap altogether, but by a wise dispensation, in time and by degrees. The soul being enabled by this inward principle, is equally disposed to the producing of all these, and as occasions do occur, doth actually perform and produce them; so that, in my conceit, that question concerning the priority of repentance, or faith, is not either of such moment or difficulty as is by some disputers pretended. The seeds of them both are at one time planted in the soul; and

[1] Epist. 105, ad Xystum. [2] Matt. v. 16.

then there is no faith in any subject but there is repentance also; nor repentance without faith. So that where it is said, 'without faith it is impossible to please God' in any thing else, it is true, but argues no necessary precedence of it before other graces; for the habits of them all are of the same age in us, and then also will it be as true, that without repentance, or without love, faith itself cannot please God: for if it be truly acceptable faith, there is both repentance and love in the same womb to keep it company. Thus are we wont to say, that only faith justifieth, but not faith alone; and the reason these promises in Scripture are made sometimes to one grace precisely, sometimes to another, is because they are all at once rooted in the man, and in their habits chained together inseparably. Faith saves every man that hath it, and yet the believingest man under heaven shall not be saved without charity. 'Charity hides a multitude of sins;' and yet the charitablest man in the world shall never have his score crossed without repentance. A catalogue of these fruits of the Spirit you may, at your leisure, make up to yourselves, for your trial, out of Galatians, v. from the 22d verse, and from 1 Pet. i. 5. All these graces together, though some belonging to one, some to another faculty of the soul, are yet all at once conceived in it, at once begin their life in the heart, though one be perhaps sooner ready to walk abroad, and show itself in the world than another: as in the 2nd of Kings, iv. 34, 'Elisha went up on the bed, and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth, and eyes upon his eyes, and hands upon his hands, and stretched himself upon the child, and the flesh of the child waxed warm;' and verse 35, 'the child sneezed seven

times, and opened his eyes.' Thus, I say, doth the Spirit apply itself unto the soul, and measure itself out to every part of it, and then the spiritual life comes at once into the soul, as motion beginning in the centre, diffuses itself equally through the whole sphere, and affecteth every part of the circumference: 'and the flesh of the child waxed warm;' where the flesh indefinitely signifieth every part of it together, and in the spiritual sense the whole soul. And this is when the inward principle, when the habit enters. Then for acts of life; one perhaps shows itself before another, as the child first 'sneezed seven times,' a violent disburdening itself of some troublesome humours that tickle in the head, to which may be answerable our spiritual clearing and purging ourselves by 'self-denial, the laying aside every weight;'[1] then 'opened his eyes,' which, in our spiritual creature, is spiritual illumination, or the eye of faith. These, I say, may first show themselves as acts, and yet sometimes others before them; yet all alike in the habit, all of one standing, one conception, one plantation in the heart; though indeed ordinarily the rougher come out first. We begin our spiritual life in repentance and contrition, and with many harsh twinges of the spirit; and then comes faith, smooth and soft, applying all the cordial promises to our penitent souls. If any judgment be to be made, which of these graces is first in the regenerate man, and which rules in chief, I conceive self-denial and faith to be there first, and most eminent, according to that notable place, where Christ seems to set down the order of graces in true disciples: 'Let him

[1] Heb. xii. 1.

deny himself, and take up his cross;'[1] that is, forego all his carnal delights, and embrace all manner of punishments and miseries, prepare himself even to go and be crucified, and 'then follow me;' that is, by a lively faith believe in Christ, and prize him before all the world besides. And indeed in effect these two are but one, though they appear to us in several shapes; for faith is nothing without self-denial, it cannot work till our carnal affections be subjected to it. A man may believe, and have flesh and fleshly lust in him; but unless faith have the pre-eminence faith is no faith. The man may be divided betwixt 'the law of his members, and the law of his mind;' so many degrees of flesh, so many of spirit: but if there be constantly but an even balance, or more of flesh than spirit; if three degrees of spirit, and five of flesh, then can there not be said to be any true self-denial, and consequently any faith; no more than that can be said to be hot, which hath more degrees of cold than heat in it. In brief, it is a good measure of self-denial that sets his faith in his throne, and when by it faith hath conquered, though not without continual resistance, when it hath once got the upper hand, then is the man said to be regenerate; whereupon it is that the regenerate state is called the 'life of faith:'[2] faith is become a principle of the greatest power and activity in the soul. And so much for these four queries, from which I conceive every thing that is material, and directly pertinent to instruct you, and open the estate of a new creature, may be resolved. And for other niceties, how far we may prepare ourselves, how co-operate and

[1] Matt. xvi. 24. [2] Gal. ii. 20.

join issue with the Spirit; whether it work irresistibly by way of physical influence, or by moral persuasion; whether, being once had, it may totally or finally be lost again, and the like; these I say, if they are fit for any, I am resolved are not necessary for a country auditory to be instructed in. It will be more for your profit to have your hearts raised, than your brains puffed up, to have your spirits and souls inwardly affected to an earnest desire and longing after it; which will perhaps be somewhat performed, if we proceed to show you the necessity of it, and unavailableness of all things else; and that by way of use and application.

II. And for the necessity of renewedness of heart; to demonstrate that, I will only crave of you to grant me, that the performance of any one duty towards God is necessary, and then it will prove itself; for it is certain no duty to God can be performed without it. For it is not a fair outside, a slight performance, a bare work done, that is accepted by God: if it were, Cain would deserve as much thanks for his sacrifice as his brother Abel; for in the outside of them there was no difference, unless perhaps on Cain's side, that he was forwardest in the duty, and offered first.[1] But it is the inside of the action, the marrow and bowels of it, that God judges by. If a sum in gross, or a bag sealed up, would pass for payment in God's audit, every man would come and make his accounts duly enough with him; and what he wanted in gold for his payment should be made up in counters. But God goes more exactly to work, when he comes to

[1] Gen. iv. 3.

call thee to an account of thy stewardship: he is a 'God of thoughts,' and a 'searcher of the heart and reins;' and it will then be a harder business to be found just when he examines, or 'clear when he will judge.' The least spot and blemish in the face of it, the least maim or imperfection in the offering, the least negligence or coldness in the performance, nay, the least corruption in the heart of him that doth it, hath utterly spoiled the sacrifice. Be the bulk and skin of the work never so large and beautiful to the eye, if it come not from a sanctified, renewed, gracious heart, it will find no acceptance, but that in the prophet, 'Who hath required it at your hands?'[1] This is not that God is taken with, or such as he commanded: it may pass for a compliment, or a work of course, but never be valued as a duty or real service. Resolve thyself to dwell nowhere but in the church, and there (like Simeon Stilites, in Eusebius) plant thyself continually in a pillar, with thy eyes and words fixed, and shot up perpetually towards heaven. If there be not a spirit within thee to give light to the eyes, to add sighs and groans to the voice, all this that thou hast done is nothing but as a blind man's pretensions to sight, and a dumb man's claim to speech; and so in like manner in all our duties which the world and carnal men set a price on; and the reason is, because every spiritual seeming work done by a natural man, is not truly so: it is nothing less than that which it is said to be. His prayers are not prayers—lip-labour perhaps, but not devotion; his serving of God is formality, not obedience; his hope of hea-

[1] Isaiah.

ven, not a hope, but a fancy. If God or Satan, a judge or a tempter, should come to reason with him about it, he would soon be worsted, and never be able to maintain his title to it. In brief, the fairest part of a natural man; that which is least counterfeit, his desire and good affections to spiritual things, (which we call favourably, natural desires of spiritual obedience,) these I say, are but false desires, false affections. 1. They have no solidity or permanency in the will, are only fluid and transitory; some slight sudden wishes, tempests and storms of a troubled mind, soon blown over: the least temptation will be sure to do it. They are like those wavering prayers without any stay of faith; 'like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and tossed.'[1] 2. That being which they have is counterfeit; they are not that which they are taken for. We are wont to say, that acts are distinguished by their objects: he sees truly which judges the thing to be that that it is. It is true, indeed, that another man sees that he takes blue for green, but he does not see truly; so also he only willeth a good thing that wills that in it which is truly good. Now the natural man, when he is said to choose spiritual things, as heaven, happiness and the like, desires not a spiritual but a carnal thing: in desiring heaven, he desires somewhat that would free him from misery in happiness, a natural or moral good, that would be acceptable to any creature under heaven: and so a Turk will desire paradise, and that very impatiently, in hope that he shall have his fill of lust there. Generally you may mark, that in such desires of spiritual things, it is some carnality that

[1] James, i. 6.

moves unregenerate men: somewhat it is that may please the flesh, and then it is not the spiritual but the carnal part of it, that is their object which they woo and make love too; which you may judge of by this, that they are frequent and importunate in their wishes for glory, seldom or never for grace (though that also may be wished for carnally, to make us more renowned and better esteemed in the world.) For the most part, I say, they desire glory, for that will make them happy, and out of danger of worldly misfortunes; remission of sins, for these lie heavy on their consciences, and give them many a twinge that they would fain be eased of; but seldom petition for grace, as if holiness, without other conveniences or gains, were not worth the having. And this arises from hence, that our love of Christ grows by sending out and fastening our affections on him as an object fittest for our turns, that will advantage us most; but not by receiving in his image and shape into our souls: this, indeed, would make us not only love, but imitate him, and, having once tasted, long after him; this would sanctify our souls, whereas the other doth but only satisfy our greedy affections.

By what hath been said, it is plain enough, (though it might be much more amplified,) that grace is of absolute necessity to performance of any holy work acceptable to God; that without it, whatsoever is done in spiritual matters is carnal; not indeed spiritual, but equivocally and absurdly so called. The natural man's desires of heaven, are not desires of heaven; his faith, no faith; his believing of the Scripture, infidelity; because he doth not apply them particularly to himself to obey them. In sum, when he prays, hopes, or gives alms,

he does somewhat indeed, and it is well done of him; but he doth not truly either pray, or hope, or give alms; there is some carnality in them that hath poisoned them, and quite altered the complexion, the constitution, and inward qualities of the work. And then, indeed, how impatient should every Christian be of this *coloquintida* within him? There is *mors in ollâ*, as the prophet once spake,[1] that is, death in the pot, that so infects and kills every thing that comes out of it. How should we abhor, and loath, and detest this old leaven that so besours all our actions? This heathenism of unregenerate carnal nature, which makes our best works so unchristian? To insist longer upon this were but to increase your thirst, not to satisfy it—to make you sensible of that marasmus and desperate drought that hath gone over your souls, but not to help you to any waters for the cure: that shall come next, as the last work of this exercise, to be performed in a word.

Having learnt what this new creature is, and how absolutely necessary to a Christian; O let us not defer one minute longer to examine our estates, whether we are yet renewed or no, and by the acts which we daily perform, observe whether the sanctifying habit be as yet infused into our souls. If the grounds of our best duties, that which moves us in our holiest actions, be found upon search to be but carnal; if a careful religious education, custom of the place which we live in, fear of human laws, nay, perhaps a good soft tender disposition, and the like, be the things that make thee love God, and perform holy duties, and not any inward

[1] 2 Kings, iv.

principle of sanctity within thee, I counsel thee to think better of thine estate, and consider whether the like motives, had it so happened that thou hadst been born and brought up in Turkey, might not have made thee worship Mahomet. I would be sorry to be rigid: I fear thou wilt find they might. Well then, a new course must be taken, all thy former heathen, carnal, or at best good moral life; all thy formal performances, the best of thy natural desires, must be content to be ranked here with circumcision and uncircumcision availing nothing; there is no trust or confidence to be placed on these Egyptian staves of reed.[1] And then, if thou wilt not live heartless for ever, if ever thou meanest to move, or walk, or do any thing, you must to that Creator of spirits and lover of souls, and never leave soliciting, till he hath breathed another breath into your nostrils, another soul into your soul: you must lay yourself at his feet, and with all the violence, and rhetoric, and humility, that these wants will prompt thee to; and woo and importune the Holy Spirit to overshadow thee, to conceive all holy graces spiritually in thee: and if thou canst not suddenly receive a gracious answer, that the Holy Ghost will come in unto thee, and lodge with thee this night: yet learn so much patience from thy beggarly estate, as not to challenge him at thy own times, but comfortably to wait his leisure. There is employment enough for thee in the while to prepare the room against his coming, to make use of all his common graces, to cleanse and reform thy foul corruptions; that when the Spirit comes it may find

[1] Isaiah, xxxvi. 6.

thee swept and garnished. All the outward means which God hath afforded thee, he commands thee to make use of, and will require it at thy hands in the best measure, even before thou art regenerate. Though thou sin in all thy unregenerate performances, for want of inward sanctity, yet it is better to have obeyed imperfectly, than not at all: the first is weakness, the other desperate presumption; the first partial obedience; the second total disobedience. Yet, whilst thou art preparing, give not over praying; they are acts very compatible; thou mayest do them both together. Whilst thou art fortifying these little kingdoms within thee, send these ambassadors abroad for help, that thou mayest be capable of it when it comes. But, above all things be circumspect, watch and observe the Spirit, and be perpetually ready to receive its blasts. Let it never have breathed on thee in vain; let thine ear be for ever open to its whisperings: if it should pass by thee either not heard, or not understood, it were a loss that all the treasures upon earth could not repair, and for the most part you know it comes not in the thunder. Christ seldom speaks so loud now-a-days as he did to Saul.[1] It is in a soft still voice; and I will not promise you that men that dwell in a mill, that are perpetually engaged in worldly loud employments, or that men asleep, shall ever come to hear of it.

The sum of all my exhortation is, after examination, to cleanse, and pray and watch; carefully to cleanse thyself, incessantly to pray, and diligently to watch for the Sun of Righteousness, when he shall begin to dawn, and rise, and shine in thy

[1] Acts, ix.

heart by grace. And do thou, O Holy Lord, work this whole work in us, prepare us by thy outward, perfect us by thy inward graces: awaken us out of the darkness of death, and plant a new seed of holy light and life in us: infuse into our heathen hearts a Christian habit of sanctity, that we may perform all spiritual duties of holiness, that we may glorify thee here by thy Spirit, and be glorified with thee by thy Christ hereafter.

Now to him that hath elected us, hath, &c.

SERMON VII.

THE AID OF THE SPIRIT TO BE SOUGHT AND PRESERVED BY PRAYER.

BY ARCHDEACON PALEY.

[WILLIAM PALEY was born in 1743. He was made subdean of Lincoln in 1795; and died in 1805.]

SERMON VII.

ROMANS, VII. 24.

O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

IF it be doctrinally true, that man in his ordinary state, in that state, at least, in which great numbers find themselves, is in a deplorable condition, a condition which ought to be a subject to him of great and bitter lamentation, viz. that his moral powers are ineffectual for his duty; able, perhaps, on most occasions, to perceive and approve of the rule of right; able, perhaps, to will it; able, perhaps, to set on foot unsuccessful, frustrated, and defeated endeavours after that will, but by no means able to pursue or execute it:—if it be also true, that strength and assistance may and can be communicated to this feeble nature, and that it is by the action of the Holy Spirit upon the soul, that it is so communicated; that with this aid and assistance sin may be successfully encountered, and such a course of duty maintained as may render us accepted in Christ: and further, that to impart the above-described assistance is one of the ends of

Christ's coming, and one of the operations of his love towards mankind:—if, I say, these propositions be doctrinally true, then follow from them these three practical rules: first, that we are to pray sincerely, earnestly, and incessantly for this assistance; secondly, that by so doing we are to obtain it; thirdly, that being obtained, we are to yield ourselves to its agency, to be obedient to its dictates.

First, we are to pray sincerely, earnestly, and incessantly, for this assistance. A fundamental, and, as it seems to me, an unsurmountable text, upon this head, is our Saviour's declaration: 'If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?'[1] This declaration, besides expressing (which was its primary object) God's benignant, prompt, and merciful disposition towards us; which here, as in other places, our Saviour compares with the disposition of a parent towards his children; besides this, the text undoubtedly assumes the fact of there being a Holy Spirit, of its being the gift of God, of its being given to them that ask him; that these things are all realities; a real spiritual assistance, really given, and given to prayer. But let it be well observed, that whensoever the Scripture speaks of prayer, whensoever it uses that term, or other terms equivalent to it, it means prayer, sincere and earnest, in the full and proper sense of these words, prayer proceeding from the heart and soul. It does not mean any particular form of words whatever; it does not mean any service of the lips,

[1] Luke, xi. 13.

any utterance or pronunciation of prayer, merely as such; but supplication actually and truly proceeding from the heart. Prayer may be solemn without being sincere. Every decency, every propriety, every visible mark and token of prayer may be present, yet the heart not engaged. This is the requisite which must make prayer availing: this is the requisite indeed which must make it that which the Scripture means whenever it speaks of prayer. Every outward act of worship, without this participation of the heart, fails; not because men do not pray sincerely, but because, in Scripture sense, they do not pray at all.

If these qualities of internal seriousness and impression belong to prayer, whenever prayer is mentioned in Scripture, they seem more peculiarly essential in a case, and for a blessing, purely and strictly spiritual. We must pray with the Spirit, at least when we pray for spiritual succour.

Furthermore; there is good authority in Scripture, which it would carry us too widely from our subject to state at present, for persevering in prayer even when long unsuccessful. Perseverance in unsuccessful prayer is one of the doctrines and of the lessons of the New Testament.

But again; we must pray for the Spirit earnestly; I mean with a degree of earnestness proportioned to the magnitude of the request. The earnestness with which we pray will always be in proportion to our sense, knowledge, and consciousness of the importance of the thing which we ask. This consciousness is the source and principle of earnestness in prayer; and in this, I fear, we are greatly deficient. We do not possess or feel it in the manner in which we ought: and we are defi-

cient upon the subject of spiritual assistance most particularly. I fear that many understand and reflect little upon the importance of what they are about, upon the exceedingly great consequence of what they are asking, when they pray to God, as we do in our liturgy, "to cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit;" "to make clean our hearts within us;" "not to take his Holy Spirit from us;" "to give us increase of grace;" "to grant that his Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts."

These are momentous petitions, little as we may perceive or think, or account of them, at the time. It has been truly said, that we are hardly ever certain of praying aright, except when we pray for the Spirit of God. When we pray for temporal blessings we do not know, though God does, whether we ask what is really for our good: when we ask for the assistance and sanctification of God's Spirit in the work and warfare of religion, we ask for that which by its very nature is good, and which, without our great fault, will be good to us.

But secondly; we must obtain it. God is propitious. You hear that he has promised it to prayer; to prayer really and truly such, to prayer, namely, issuing from the heart and soul; for no other is ever meant. We are suppliants to our Maker for various and continual blessings; for health, for ease; it may be for prosperity and success. There is, as hath already been observed, some degree of uncertainty in all these cases, whether we ask what is fit and proper to be granted; or even what, if granted, would do us good. There is this, likewise, further to be observed, that they are what, if such be the pleasure of God, we can

do without. But how incapable we are of doing without God's Spirit, of proceeding in our spiritual course upon our own strength and our own resources, of finally accomplishing the work of salvation without it, the strong description which is given by St. Paul may convince us, if our own experience had not convinced us before. Many of us, a large majority of us, either require or have required a great change, a moral regeneration. This is to be effectuated by the aid of God's Spirit. Vitiated hearts will not change themselves; not easily, not frequently, not naturally, perhaps, not possibly. Yet, 'without holiness no man shall see God.' How then are the unholy to become holy? Holiness is a thing of the heart and soul. It is not a few forced, constrained actions, though good as actions, which constitute holiness. It must reside within us: it is a disposition of soul. To acquire, therefore, that which is not yet acquired, to change that which is not yet changed, to go to the root of the malady, to cleanse and purify the inside of the cup, the foulness of our mind, is a work of the Spirit of God within us. Nay, more; many, as the Scripture most significantly expresses it, are dead in sins and trespasses; not only committing sins and trespasses, but dead in them: that is, as insensible of their condition under them, as a dead man is insensible of his condition. Where this is the case, the sinner must, in the first instance, be roused and quickened to a sense of his condition; of his danger, his fate: in a word, he must, by some means or other, be brought to feel a strong compunction. This is also an office for the Spirit of God. 'You hath he quickened, who were dead

in trespasses and sins.'[1] 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.'[2] Whether, therefore, we be amongst the dead in sin; or whether we be of the number of those, with whom, according to St. Paul's description, to will is present, but how to perform that which is good they find not; who, though they approve the law of God, nay delight in it, after the inward man, that is, in the answers of their conscience, are nevertheless, 'brought into captivity' to the law of sin, which is in their members; carnal, sold under sin; doing what they allow not, what they hate; doing not the good which they would, but the evil which they would not: whichever of these be our wretched estate, for such the apostle pronounces it to be, the grace and influence of God's Spirit must be obtained, in order to rescue and deliver us from it; and the sense of this want and of this necessity lies at the root of our devotions, when directed to this object.

To those who are in a better state than what has been here described, little need be said, because the very supposition of their being in a better state, includes that earnest and devout application by prayer for the continual aid, presence, and indwelling of God's Holy Spirit, which we state to be a duty of the Christian religion.

But, thirdly, the assistance of God's Spirit being obtained, we are to yield ourselves to its direction; to consult, attend, and listen to its dictates, suggested to us through the admonitions of our conscience. The terms of Scripture represent the

[1] Eph. ii. 1. [2] Ib. v. 14.

Spirit of God as an assisting, not a forcing power; as not suspending our own powers, but enabling them; as imparting strength and faculty for our religious work, if we will use them; but whether we will use them or not, still depending upon ourselves. Agreeably hereunto St. Paul, you have heard, asserts, that 'there is no condemnation to them who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' The promise is not to them who have the Spirit, but to them who walk after the Spirit. To walk after the flesh, is to follow the impulses of sensuality and selfishness wherever they lead us; which is a voluntary act. To walk after the Spirit, is steadily and resolutely to obey good motions within us, whatever they cost us: which also is a voluntary act. All the language of this remarkable chapter[1] proceeds in the same strain; namely, that after the Spirit of God is given, it remains and rests with ourselves whether we avail ourselves of it or not. 'If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh ye shall live.' It is through the Spirit that we are enabled to mortify the deeds of the flesh. But still, whether we mortify them or not, is our act, because it is made a subject of precept and exhortation so to do. Health is God's gift: but what use we will make of it, is our choice. Bodily strength is God's gift; but of what advantage it shall be to us, depends upon ourselves. Even so, the higher gift of the Spirit remains a gift, the value of which will be exceedingly great, will be little, will be none, will be even an increase of guilt and condemnation, according as it is applied and obeyed, or neglected

[1] Rom. vii.

and withstood. The fourth chapter of Ephesians, verse 30, is a warning voice upon this subject: 'Grieve not the Spirit of God;' therefore he may be grieved: being given, he may be rejected; rejected, he may be withdrawn.

St. Paul represents the gift and possession of the Spirit in these words: 'Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you;'[1] and its efficacy, where it is efficacious, in the following magnificent terms: 'If the Spirit of him that raised Christ from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.' What, nevertheless, is the practical inference therefrom stated in the very next words? 'Therefore, brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh, to live after the flesh, for if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die:' consequently it is still possible, and plainly conceived, and supposed, and stated to be so, even after this communication of the Spirit, to live, notwithstanding, according to the flesh: and still true, that, 'if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.' 'We are debtors;' our obligation, our duty imposed upon us by this gift of the Spirit, is no longer to live after the flesh; but, on the contrary, through the Spirit so given, to do that which, without it, we could not have done, to 'mortify the deeds of the body.' Thus following the suggestions of the Spirit, ye shall live: for 'as many as are led by the Spirit of God,' as many as yield themselves to its guidance and direction, 'they are the sons of God.'

To conclude the subject. The difference be-

[1] Rom. viii.

tween those who succeed and those who fail in their Christian course, between those who attain and those who do not attain salvation, is this: they may both feel equally the weakness of their nature, the existence and the power of evil propensities within them; but the former, by praying with their whole heart and soul, and that perseveringly, for spiritual assistance, obtain it; and, by the aid so obtained, are enabled to withstand, and do, in fact, withstand, their evil propensities; the latter sink under them. I will not say that all are comprised under this description; for neither are all included in St. Paul's account of the matter, from which our discourse set out; but I think that it represents the general condition of Christians, as to their spiritual state; and that the greatest part of those who read this discourse will find, that they belong to one side or other of the alternative here stated.

SERMON VIII.

FAITH THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

BY BISHOP SHERLOCK.

[THOMAS SHERLOCK was born in the year 1678. He was appointed Master of the Temple in 1704, Dean of Chichester in 1715, and Bishop of Bangor in 1727. In 1734 he was translated to the see of Salisbury; and again, in 1748, to that of London. He died in 1761.]

SERMON VIII.

EPHESIANS, II. 8.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.

WE have here, in few words, the argument which St Paul always insists on, when he has occasion to set forth the kindness of God towards mankind. Life and immortality are the greatest blessings that we have any notion of; and these were brought to light by the gospel of Christ: him God gave for a Redeemer to the world, 'that whosoever believeth on him should not die, but have eternal life.' And even that through faith in him we are saved, is the gift of God; for of ourselves we are able to do nothing. These things are taught us in the compass of the text, 'We are saved by grace:' we had no title or claim to salvation, but God of his own good will hath sent among us plenteous redemption; and, according to the richness of his mercy, and the great love wherewith he loved us, hath, together with Christ, quickened us who were dead in sins. The condition of this salvation on our part is faith; for we are saved by grace

'through faith.' We must believe our Redeemer, that he cometh from God, and hath the words of life; and must rely on him to perform the word of salvation which is gone out of his mouth. But neither upon the performance of this condition can we say that our own arm hath saved us, or that we have done any thing towards perfecting our redemption; for this salvation through faith, and this faith, is 'not of ourselves, it is the gift of God.'

I shall discourse on this proposition, that faith is the gift of God. First, I shall endeavour to show what the Scripture doctrine on this head is; and, Secondly, shall suggest to you some considerations proper to this subject.

First then, let us consider what the Scripture doctrine on this head is. The faith which St. Paul speaks of in the text is such a faith as is effectual to salvation; for it is the faith through which, by grace, we are saved: this faith he asserts to be the gift of God. There are different significations of the word faith in Scripture: sometimes it signifies barely an assent of the mind to the revelations and doctrines of the gospel, grounded upon such evidence as the things were capable of. This faith sometimes is merely the effect of common sense; for men cannot help believing the things they see. Sometimes this faith is grounded on the necessary deductions of reason from common principles; by this means we arrive at the knowledge of God: a man of reason can no more avoid believing the existence of a first cause, than a man with eyes can avoid thinking that there is a material world, in which he lives. But neither has this assent of the mind the true nature of faith in

it: 'Thou believest,' saith St. James, 'that there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe, and tremble.' But neither of these kinds of faith being the faith through which we are saved, you cannot say that St. Paul asserts of these, that they are the gift of God; any further than as sense and reason are his gifts, by which we know these and all other things. Nor do we teach that nature and reason cannot lead to the speculative knowledge of divine truths; for the evidence of all divine truth resolves itself ultimately into either sense or reason; which are the common gifts of God to mankind, by the principles of which the truth of all things, depending upon the deductions of sense and reason, may be proved and examined. From the exercise of reason we come to know God, and the essential difference between good and evil; and by these principles are enabled to judge of any doctrine, whether it be agreeable to the pure and holy nature of God; which is the first presumptive argument for the truth of any divine revelation; that it is holy and pure, and such an one as, were God to have given a law to the world, he would have given: from reason we learn the unlimited power of God; and from sense and reason we know the limited power of man; and are enabled to distinguish between the works which the power or policy of man can perform, and the works which can flow only from the unbounded power of God: from hence we can judge of the positive arguments of a divine revelation, the works and miracles which are offered to the world in confirmation of its truth. Thus far the natural gifts of sense and reason can carry us; but the result is barely the assent or dissent of the mind to the things under inquiry, which

assent alone is not the faith through which we are saved.

But let it be observed, as to these first rudiments of faith, that though reason and knowledge may attain to them, yet the exercise of reason and knowledge depends upon the will and inclination; which are not naturally much given to dwell upon the subject of religion, but are engaged in the affairs and concerns of the world, and taken up in the pursuit of present pleasures and enjoyments: that, were men left to themselves, but few would arrive even to this degree of faith; not for want of understanding to discern, but for want of will to inquire after the things which make for their salvation. Thus, at the first preaching of the gospel, all the worldly-minded men, and generally all the great men, were professed enemies to our Saviour. No sooner did he appear to preach a new doctrine, but they opposed him: not that they had time or opportunity to examine his pretensions, but this presumption, that his doctrine would thwart their interest, and lessen their power and authority among the people, prevailed with them to endeavour to stifle and suppress this new doctrine before it spread to their prejudice: in which they were evidently guided, not by sense or reason, but by a perverse will and evil disposition. And since men cannot but know, from their natural notions of good and evil, that any revelation coming from a pure and holy God must cross their evil designs and affections, they cannot but lie under a great indispositon to inquire after divine truths, in which, as long as lust and passion have the dominion over them, they can promise themselves but little comfort or satisfaction: so that, to enable men

fairly to examine the truth of a divine revelation, and to acknowledge it upon full and sufficient evidence, there must be such a disposition of mind to receive whatever may appear to be the will of God, as may enable you to be impartial judges. This our Saviour requires of us, when he says, 'If any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself:' that is, if any man has so far got the victory over his own passions and lusts, as to be ready to give himself to the direction of God's will, whenever it may be made appear to him; this man is in a right disposition to receive the truths of the gospel, and to judge whether Christ be indeed the prophet of the Most High. Now this disposition is far from being natural to man, according to the nature man has at present; and therefore thus to prepare and dispose men's minds to receive the gospel, is the work of the Spirit, and is ascribed to him constantly in Scripture, where there is occasion to speak of it. 'No man,' says our Lord, 'can come unto me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.' And again, 'No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father:' that is, unless the Father, by the grace of his Spirit, inclines and disposes his will to attend to the words of life which I deliver. To the same purpose he speaks in another place: 'He that is of God, heareth God's word;' where, to be of God, is no more than to be of the number of those who are disposed to obey God; for, if to be of God signifies any thing more, it will hardly leave any tolerable sense for the word. Our Saviour would not say, Those who obey God will hear God's word; which is saying, Those who obey God,

will obey God: and therefore, to be of God, must signify no more than to be ready and disposed to receive the will of God, by the influence of his grace. To be of God, and to be drawn of God, and to be willing to do the will of God, are manifestly put to signify the same thing, because the same thing is affirmed of them. Our Saviour says, 'No man can come unto him, unless he be drawn of God;' and yet he says, 'He that is of God will hear his word;' and, in another place, 'If any man is willing to do the will of God, he shall know of his doctrine;' and if so, then to be willing to do the will of God must amount to the same thing with being of God, and being drawn by God. From whence it follows, that those who are willing to do his will, that is, disposed to receive his truth, are drawn by him: that is, all who are well disposed to receive the faith of Christ, owe their disposition to the grace and influence of God's holy Spirit. Accordingly we read of Lydia, that 'God opened her heart to attend unto the things which were spoken of Paul;' where, opening her heart, can signify nothing but inclining her will to attend to, and examine the truths of the gospel, which were the things spoken by Paul. And, as faith is ascribed to this disposition wrought by the Spirit of God, so the want of faith is ascribed to the contrary disposition, where a man is under the power of lust and appetite, and possessed with the love of this world and the pleasures of it. 'If our gospel be hid,' says St. Paul, 'it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.'

But, secondly, faith signifies likewise trust and reliance on God; and includes a confident hope and expectation that God will perform his promises made to us in his Son. It is described as an active principle of religion, influencing the mind to obedience to the law of God. This is the faith through which 'we are saved,' and is affirmed by St. Paul to be 'the gift of God:' to this faith we owe our growth and progress in all kinds of Christian graces and virtues; this is the foundation of them, and this it is that makes them acceptable to God, that they are done in faith. That faith is perfect which is attended with a good conscience, 'void of offence towards God and towards man.' These two St. Paul couples together in his advice to Timothy, enjoining him 'to hold the faith and a good conscience, which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck:' so that faith cannot stand without a good conscience: that is, it is no faith which does not 'purge the conscience from dead works,' and 'perfect holiness in the fear of God.' Now all that reason can do, is to assent or dissent to any doctrine; but obedience must come from the will. Wicked men often believe; but, like the devils, they tremble at the majesty of God, and do not love or delight in him, or seek to do his will. Faith then is made up of the concurrence of the will and the understanding. The understanding is still the rule to judge truth by; but the will is not the right rule of action, and therefore the assistance of the Spirit, to induce the will to follow the understanding, is necessary in the perfect work of faith: and this work is ascribed to the Spirit in Scripture. Our Saviour, speaking to his disciples, tells them, 'I am the vine, ye are the branches; he

that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.' Christ abideth in his members by his Holy Spirit; and therefore we are told, 'that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost.' So then our Saviour's doctrine is, that without the assistance of his Spirit we can do nothing; but with it we may bring forth fruit. To bring forth fruit, in the phrase of Scripture, is to be obedient to the laws of God, and to be employed in the works of righteousness: so that faith cannot be perfected, or become the governing principle of our lives, without the assistance of the Spirit, to subdue our wills to the law of holiness. Faith, in this sense, is reckoned among the fruits of the Spirit, both in the Epistle to the Galatians and in that of the Corinthians: 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith.' So, in the Epistle to the Philippians, the apostle tells them, 'It is given unto them in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake:' where the apostle's doctrine is manifestly this—that both to believe in Christ and to suffer for Christ, are the gifts of God through his Holy Spirit. I shall not multiply quotations upon this head, which lie ready to any diligent inquirer's search; but shall spend the time that remains in suggesting to you some proper observations on this subject.

And, first, our ascribing faith to the operation of the Spirit does not make our faith cease to be a reasonable act of the mind: and yet this surmise is apt to affect men; and they think it is for want of reason to prove our religion, that we require the gift of faith to make it go down. But the case is far otherwise: the apostle advises us, 'always to

be ready to give to every one that asketh it of us, a reason of the faith that is in us; consequently, reason and faith, or reason and the gift of the Spirit, are consistent; or else it would not be possible for those who receive faith by the Spirit, to give a reason of the faith that is in them. Besides, a revelation sufficiently attested, that is, sufficiently proved to reason, is presupposed to the work of faith; for the gift of faith administers no new arguments for religion: and therefore, if it be not a reasonable religion before we have faith, it cannot be so afterwards. The first work of faith upon the minds of men, as I proved by comparison of several parts of Scripture, is to dispose them to listen after and obey the will of God. Lydia's heart was opened by grace; this did not make her, right or wrong, take up with the apostle's doctrine, but it is said, that 'she attended to the words that were spoken by Paul.' Now, the more you attend to a thing that has no reason in it, the less you will like it: let the Spirit therefore supply the grace of attention in the greatest measure; if there wants reason or evidence in the things we attend to, attention will serve no other purpose than to show us these defects: so that this gift of the Spirit neither influences the reason of man, nor the reason of the thing; consequently this gift of the Spirit is no ways inconsistent with reason. So neither is that other gift of the Spirit, by which we are disposed to a readiness to obey the will of God; for my being ready to obey the will of God cannot make a doctrine to be the will of God, which is not the will of God; or make me see arguments to prove a doctrine where there are none: consequently, let a man be ever so ready to obey the will of God,

it cannot affect his judgment in discerning what is the will of God, or disturb the exercise of reason in searching for the doctrine which does contain the will of God. And therefore this gift of the Spirit likewise leaves a man free to examine the proofs of religion, and does not influence his mind one way or other in judging the truth: for a man who is willing to do the will of God must necessarily be very unwilling to do what is not his will; and therefore will be very loath to take up with any doctrine for the will of God, which is not sufficiently proved to be so. This grace therefore only puts him upon searching and examining the pretences of religion, upon the exercise of reason, to discern where truth lies: and this, I suppose, will be allowed to be the most reasonable thing a man can do. Thus, you see, the assent of the mind to the truth of religion is an act of reason, and must be so, notwithstanding the gifts and assistances of the Spirit. And as reason is not disturbed by the gifts of the Spirit, which are previous to the assent of the mind; so, I hope, it will not be thought it can be influenced by those that are consequent to it. Faith is not perfected but through obedience. The power to obey and to love God we ascribe to the Spirit. Now you cannot obey God, till you know what is the will of God; therefore you must first judge of religion, before this gift can operate: and therefore this gift cannot affect your reason one way or other. After you have proved and consented to the truth of the gospel, it is highly reasonable you should obey it. But though reason, upon due application, can discern the truth, yet it cannot govern the corrupt will: and therefore it is one thing to judge with reason, another thing to

act with reason: and the grace of obedience is given us by the Spirit, that we may not only think, but act, like reasonable creatures.

I do not remember that God ever promised to force or subdue our reason to the belief of the gospel by his Spirit: if he had taken this method, he might have saved the trouble of working signs, and wonders, and miracles, and all other arguments might have been spared, which are only appeals to reason, and would have been needless, had the Spirit been given to particular persons for the conviction of their minds. The apostle often prays, in behalf of his converts, 'that God would enlighten their minds and understandings; that he would increase their knowledge; that he would give them a right judgment in all things.' But I think it will be agreed, that the more enlightened a man's mind is, the larger the compass of knowledge and understanding, and the better his judgment is, the more acute he will be in distinguishing truth from falsehood; consequently, the better able to judge of religion, and the less ready to receive it without sufficient evidence; that is, without reason.

In the second chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul treats of the method by which we arrive to the knowledge of spiritual truths: 'They are,' he says, 'spiritually discerned, and the natural man cannot receive them; they are foolishness to him:' and, upon this authority, even the use of reason has been rejected in inquiries of religion, and men sent to the Spirit for proof. But what the apostle says here will be found consistent with what has been already said upon this head. In the third verse he tells the Corinthians, that 'his preaching was not with the enticing words of

man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power;' that is, he did not preach from natural topics, but preached the things which the Spirit had revealed to him; and gave the works of the Spirit, that is, signs and miracles, for proof of his doctrine. But this was a reasonable proof still, and such an one as reason could judge of. Verse the fourteenth he says, 'The natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God:' which is very true; for how should natural reason furnish arguments to prove the revelations of God, which have no connexion with natural principles of reason? But then he adds, 'These things are spiritually discerned;' or, as he words it in the eighteenth verse, 'they are discerned by comparing spiritual things with spiritual;' that is, by comparing the proofs of the Spirit and the revelations of the Spirit together. This comparison is the work of reason; for reason discerns the agreement between these spiritual things, and, by considering the works and wonders of the Spirit, submits to the revelations of the Spirit. So what the apostle affirms here is only this, that the revelations of God are not to be examined or known by principles or proofs of natural reason, but must be manifested by the proofs of the Spirit; for we have no proofs from reason for the revelations of the gospel, but we have the works of the Spirit, by which they are attested. And here it is plain what the work of the Spirit is: it brings proofs to the reason of man, but does not bring the reason of man to the proofs: so that reason and faith, or reason and the gift of the Spirit, are consistent.

Secondly, As to the measure in which the Spirit is given, the Scripture is not express: this we are

sure of, that all to whom the Spirit is given do not obey the Spirit; for we read of some who 'resist the Spirit of God,' who 'do despite to the Holy Spirit:' from whence it is evident, that all who are lost, are not lost for want of due assistance from God; since they had the offer of the Spirit, but refused and withstood his holy motions. God has engaged in Christ to give us all things necessary to our salvation; and therefore, as far as the Spirit is necessary, so far we are sure of his assistance. As men improve in virtue and holiness, they contract a greater familiarity with the Holy Spirit; with such he is said 'to dwell, to abide with them:' which answers to what our Saviour says, 'To him that hath, it shall be given: and from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away.' The plain consequence of which is, that we should, according to the apostle's advice, 'work out our salvation with fear and trembling; for God worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.' If therefore we cease to work whilst we have time and opportunity, God will withdraw his grace from us; 'even that which we have shall be taken from us.' We cannot work without God: therefore should we work with fear and trembling, lest, if we neglect the appointed time, we should be left destitute of help, without hope or remedy.

Lastly, we may collect what are the signs and marks of grace in the regenerate; even this, that we keep the will of God. I before observed, that to be drawn of God and to be willing to do his will, are one and the same thing: if so, then all who do the will of God, are drawn of God; and all who are effectually drawn of God, do his will. From whence it follows, that all who live vir-

tuously and holily have the Spirit of God, and all who do wickedly are of their father the devil. From whence it follows, that it is a vain and ill grounded confidence that some men have in their spiritual attainments, whilst they work the works of darkness: for he only that doth the works of the Spirit hath the Spirit of God; and 'hereby do we know that we love him, if we keep his commandments.'

SERMON IX.

THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT.

BY BISHOP SANDERSON.

[ROBERT SANDERSON was born in 1587, made Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, in 1642, and at the Restoration, Bishop of Lincoln. He died in 1662.]

SERMON IX.

GAL. v. 22, 23.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

HE that shall impartially look upon former and the present times, shall find that of Solomon exactly true, 'There is no new thing under the sun.'[1] *Vetus fabula, novi histriones.* The things we see done are but the same things that have been done: only acted over again by new persons, and with a few new circumstances.[2] It was in the apostle's times, and the churches of Galatia, even as it is with us in these days. False teachers had crept in among them; who by their hypocrisy and pretensions of the Spirit, had so corrupted their faith, that they were removed, after a sort, unto another gospel; and so extremely soured their charity, that from provoking and envying, they were now grown to biting and devouring one another.[3]

[1] Eccl. i. 9. [2] Nihil novi video, nihil novi facio. Senec.
[3] Gal. i. 6; v. 15, 26.

The apostle wondering at this so unexpected a change, ('I marvel you are so soon removed,'[1]) to see them so befooled in their understandings, and bewitched in their affections, as to suffer so sore and sudden a decay, in the two most essential parts of Christian religion, faith and charity—thought it high time for him, after he had first well schooled them, ('O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?'[2]) to offer his advice towards the allaying of those heats and distempers, that were the causes of this so sad and dangerous an alteration.

The remedy he prescribeth for that end is short, but very sure, if they will but follow it: 'Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.'[3] As if he had said—You talk much of the Spirit; but you make it little appear in the fruit of your lives, that you are led by the Spirit. The Spirit and the flesh are contraries; and they lust contrary things.[4] If you were as careful to walk in the Spirit as you are to boast of it, you would not be so forward as now you are, by cherishing unbrotherly contentions, and sundry other ways, to fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

A hard thing it is, to bring an overweening hypocrite to a true understanding of himself; for pride and hypocrisy are two such things as few men are willing to own. That they might therefore with better certainty be able to discern whether they were indeed spiritual, or but yet carnal, the apostle proceedeth to describe the flesh and the Spirit by their different effects. A catalogue we have for that purpose of the works of the flesh, in seventeen particulars, in the three next

[1] Gal. i. 6. [2] Ib. iii. 1. [3] Ib. v. 16. [4] Ib. verse 17.

verses before the text; and then another catalogue of the fruits of the Spirit, in nine particulars, in the text itself. Wherein we may observe three things: first, the notion, or general description of spiritual graces, as they are are here proposed: they go under this name, 'The fruit of the Spirit.' Secondly, the particular species given under that name or notion: they are these nine—'love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.' Thirdly, a special privilege belonging to all and every the aforesaid particulars: to wit, exemption from the law; 'against such there is no law.'

I. In the general description (which is like to be our only business at this time) the thing we are to take notice of is, the differences that may be observed, between the titles under which St. Paul hath entered the several particulars of both sorts; as they are set down, the one in the beginning of verse 19: 'The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery,' &c. the other in the beginning of verse 22: 'But the fruit of the Spirit is love,' &c. and those differences are four. First, those effects of the former sort proceed originally from the flesh; these from the Spirit. Secondly, those are rather styled by the name of works, these by the name of fruit: the works of the flesh, but the fruit of the Spirit. Thirdly, those are set forth as many and apart,—works, in the plural: these as many, but united into one,—fruit, in the singular. Fourthly, those are expressly said to be manifest: of these no such thing at all mentioned.

1. The first difference, which ariseth from the nature of the things themselves, as they relate to their

several proper causes, is of the four the most obvious and important: and it is this: that whereas the vicious habits and sinful actions catalogued in the former verses, are the production of the flesh, the graces and virtues specified in the text, are ascribed to the Spirit, as to their proper and original cause. They are not the works of the flesh, as the former, but the fruit of the Spirit.

Where the first question, that every man will be ready to ask, is, what is here meant by the Spirit? The necessity of expressing supernatural and divine things, by words taken from natural or human affairs, hath produced another necessity of enlarging the significations of sundry of those words to a very great latitude. Which is one special cause of the obscurity which is found in sundry places of holy Scripture, and consequently of the difficulty of giving the proper and genuine sense of such places; and consequently to that (amidst so many interpretations of one and the same place, whilst each contendeth for that sense which himself hath pitched upon) of infinite disputes and controversies in point of religion. Among which words, three especially I have observed, all of them of very frequent use in the New Testament; which, as they are subject to greater variety of signification than most other words are, so have they ever yet been, and are like to be to the world's end, the matter and fuel of very many, and very fierce contentions in the church. Those three are, faith, grace, and spirit. Truly I am persuaded, if it were possible all men could agree in what signification each of those three words were to be understood in each place where any of them are found, three full parts at least, of four, of those unhappy

controversies that have been held up in the Christian church, would vanish.

And of the three, this of spirit hath yet the greatest variety of significations. God in his essence; the person of the Holy Ghost; good angels; evil angels; extraordinary gifts, wherewith the apostles and others in the primitive times were endowed; the several faculties of the soul, as understanding, affections, and conscience; the whole soul of man; supernatural grace, besides many others not needful now to be remembered—all come under this appellation of spirit. Much of the ambiguity of the word (I confess) is cut off, when it is opposed to flesh; yet even then also it wanteth no variety. The divine and human nature in the person of Christ; the literal and mystical sense of Scripture; the ordinances of the Old and New Testament; the body and the soul; sensuality and reason; the corruption of nature, and the grace of God: all these may, according to the peculiar exigence of several places, be understood by the terms of flesh and spirit.

Generally, the word spirit, in the common notion of it, importeth a thing of subtle parts, but of an operative quality. So that the less any thing hath of matter, and the more of virtue, the nearer it cometh to the nature of a spirit: as the wind, and the quintessences of vegetables or minerals extracted by chemical operation. We use to say of a man, that is of a sad, sluggish, and plegmatic temper, that he hath no spirit; but, if he be lively, active, quick, and vigorous, we then say, he hath spirit in him. It is said of the queen of Sheba, when she saw the wisdom and royal state of king

Solomon, that 'there was no more spirit left in her:'[1] that is, she stood mute and amazed at it, as if she had had no life, speech, sense, or motion in her. The soul is therefore called a spirit, because being itself no bodily substance, it yet actuateth and enliveneth the body; and is the inward principle of life there unto: it is called therefore 'the spirit of life;'[2] and St. James saith, 'the body without the spirit is dead:'[3] that is, it is a lifeless lump of flesh without the soul. So that whatsoever is *principium agendi internum*, 'the fountain of action or operation, as an inward principle thereof,' may in that respect borrow the name of a spirit; insomuch that the very flesh itself, so far forth as it is the fountain of all those evil works mentioned in the foregoing verses, may in that respect be called a spirit; and so is by St. James: 'The spirit that is in us lusteth after envy,'[4] saith he; that is, in very deed, the flesh that is in us; for among the lusts and works of the flesh is envy reckoned in the very next verse before the text.

To come up close to the point, (for I fear I have kept off too long) as they stand here opposed, by flesh, I take to be clearly meant the natural corruption of man; and by spirit, the supernatural grace of God. Even as the same words are also taken in some other places: as, namely, in that saying of our Saviour, 'That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit.'[5] Which words may serve as a good com-

[1] 1 Kings, x. 5. [2] Gen. ii. 7.
[3] James, ii. 26. [4] Ibid. iv. 5.
[5] John, iii. 6.

mentary upon this part of the text; for they do not only warrant the interpretation, but afford us also the reason of it, under the analogy of a twofold birth or generation. The generation, whether of plants or living creatures, is effectual by that prolifical virtue which is in the seed. Answerable, therefore, unto the twofold birth, spoken of in the Scriptures, there is also a twofold seed. The first birth, is that of the old man, by natural generation, whereby we are born the sons of Adam. The second birth, is that of the new man, by spiritual regeneration, whereby we are born the sons of God. Answerably whereunto the first seed is *semen Adæ*, the seed of old Adam, derived unto us by carnal propagation from our natural parents, who are therefore called, 'the fathers of our flesh,'[1] together wherewith is also derived that corruption, which upon our first birth cleaveth so inseparably to our nature, and is the inward principle, from which all the works of the flesh have their emanation. But, then there is another seed, '*semen Dei*,'[2] as St. John calleth it, the seed of the second Adam, Jesus Christ, God blessed for ever, derived unto us by the communication of his holy Spirit inwardly renewing us; together wherewith is also derived a measure of inherent supernatural grace, as the inward principle, whence all these choice fruits of the Spirit do flow.

So that upon the whole matter these two points are clear. First, clear it is, that all the wicked practices recited and condemned in the foregoing verses, with all other of like quality, do proceed

[1] Heb. xii. 9. [2] 1 John, iii. 9.

merely from the corruption that is in us, from our own depraved minds and wills, without any the least co-operation of the Holy Spirit of God therein.[1] It cannot stand with the goodness of God to be the principal; and neither with his goodness nor greatness to be an accessory, in any sinful action. He cannot be either the author, or the abettor of any thing that is evil. Whoso, therefore, hath committed any sin, let him take heed he do not add another and a worse to it, by charging God with it: rather let him give God and his Spirit glory, by taking all the blame and shame of it to himself and his own flesh. All sinful works are works of the flesh. Secondly, it is clear also, that all the holy affections and performances here mentioned, with all other Christian virtues and graces accompanying salvation, not here mentioned, though performed immediately by us, and with the free consent of our own wills, are yet the fruit of God's Spirit working in us. That is to say, they do not proceed originally from any strength of nature, or any inherent power in man's free-will; nor are they acquired by the culture of philosophy, the advantages of education, or any improvement whatsoever of natural abilities by the helps of art or industry; but are in truth the proper effects of that supernatural grace which is given unto us by the good pleasure of God the Father, merited for us by the precious blood of God the Son, and conveyed into our hearts by the sweet and secret inspirations of God the Holy Ghost. 'Love, joy, peace,' &c. are fruits, not at

[1] Τὰ - ονερὰ ἔργα ἐξ ἡμῶνγίν εται μόνον, διὸ ϗ ἔργα καλεῖ. —Chrysost.

all of the flesh, but merely and entirely of the Spirit.

All those very many passages in the New Testament, which either set forth the unframeableness of our nature to the doing of any thing that is good,—'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think a good thought;' 'In me, that is in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing,' and the like: or else ascribe our best performances to the glory of the grace of God,—'Without me you can do nothing;' 'All our sufficiency is of God;' 'Not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;' 'It is God that worketh in you both the will and the deed,'[2] and the like, are so many clear confirmations of the truth. Upon the evidence of which truth it is, that our mother, the church, hath taught us in the public service to beg at the hands of Almighty God, that he would "endue us with the grace of his Holy Spirit, to amend our lives according to his holy word;" and again (consonantly to the matter we are now in hand with, almost in the same terms) that he would "give to all men increase of grace, to hear meekly his word, and to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit." As without which grace it were not possible for us to amend our lives, or to bring forth such fruits, according as God requireth in his holy word.

And the reason is clear; because as the tree is, such must the fruit be. Do men look to 'gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?'[3] Or can they expect from a salt fountain other than brackish water? Certainly, what is born of flesh can be no

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 5; Rom. vii. 18.
[2] John, xv. 7; 2 Cor. iii. 5; Eph. ii. 8; Phil. ii. 13.
[3] Matt. vii. 16.

better than flesh. 'Who can bring a clean thing out of that which is unclean?'[1] Or how can any thing that is good proceed from a heart, all the 'imaginations of the thoughts whereof are only and continually evil?'[2] If we would have the fruit good, reason wills (and our Saviour prescribeth the same method) that order be taken, first to make the tree good.

But you will say, It is as impossible so to alter the nature of the flesh as to make it bring forth good spiritual fruit, as it is to alter the nature of a crab or thorn, so as to make it bring forth a pleasant apple. Truly and so it is: if you shall endeavour to mend the fruit by altering the stock, you shall find the labour altogether fruitless. A crab will be a crab still, when you have done what you can; and you may as well hope to wash an Ethiopian white, as to purge the flesh from sinful pollution.

The work therefore must be done quite another way; not by alteration, but addition. That is, leaving the old principle to remain as it was, by superinducing, *ab extra*, a new principle, of a different and more kindly quality. We see the experiment of it daily in the grafting of trees. A crab-stock, if it have a scion of some delicate apple artfully grafted in it; look what branches are suffered to grow out of the stock itself, they will all follow the nature of the stock, and if they bring forth any fruit at all, it will be sour and styptic; but the fruit that groweth from the graft will be pleasant to the taste, because it followeth the nature of the graft. We read of λόγος ἔμφυτος, 'an

[1] Job. xiv. 4. [2] Gen. vi.

engrafted word.'[1] Our carnal hearts are the old stock; which, before the word of God be grafted in it, cannot bring forth any spiritual fruit acceptable to God; but when, by the powerful operation of his Holy Spirit, the word which we hear with our outward ears is inwardly grafted therein, it then bringeth forth the fruit of good living. So that all the bad fruits that appear in our lives come from the old stock, the flesh, and if there be any 'good fruit of the Spirit' in us, it is from the virtue of that word of grace that is grafted in us.

It should be our care, then, since the Scriptures call so hard upon us for fruits, ('to be fruitful in good works,' to 'bring forth fruits meet for repentance,' &c.[2]) and threaten us with excision and fire, if we do not bring forth fruit, and that good fruit too—it should be our care, I say, to bestow, at least, as much diligence about our hearts as good husbandmen do about their fruit-trees. They will not suffer any suckers or luxuriant branches to grow from the stock; but as soon as they begin to appear, or at least before they come to any bigness, cut them off, and cast them away. By so doing, the grafts thrive the better, and bring forth fruit both sooner and fairer. God hath entrusted us with the custody and culture of our own hearts, as Adam was 'put into the garden to keep it and to dress it;'[3] and besides the charge given us in that behalf, it behoveth us much, for our own good, 'to keep them with all diligence.'[4] If we husband them well, the benefit will be ours. He looketh

[1] James, i. 21. [2] Col. i. 10; Matt. iii. 8, 10.
[3] Gen. ii. 15. [4] Prov. iv. 23.

for no more but his rent,—and that an easy rent, —the glory, and the thanks: the fruits wholly accrue to us, as usufructuaries. But if we be such ill husbandmen, so careless and improvident as to let them overgrow with wild and superfluous branches, to hinder the thriving of the grafts, whereby they become ill-liking and unfruitful, we shall neither answer the trust committed to us, nor be able to pay our rent, (we shall bring him in no glory,) nor do ourselves any good; but run behindhand continually, and come to nought at last.

It will behove us therefore, if we will have 'our fruit in holiness, and the end everlasting life,'[1] to look to it betimes; 'lest some root of bitterness springing up,'[2] put us to more trouble than we are aware of for the present, or can be well able to deal withal afterwards. The flesh will find us work enough to be sure: it is ever and anon putting forth shoots of avarice, ambition, envy, revenge, pride, luxury, some noisome lust or other; like a rotten dunghill, that is rank of weeds. If we neglect them but a little, out of a thought that they can do no great harm yet, or that we shall have time enough to snub[3] them hereafter, we do it to our own certain disadvantage, if not utter undoing: we shall either never be able to overcome them, or not without very much more labour and difficulty than we might have done at the first.

In the mean time, whilst these superfluous excrescencies (*ἐκφυαὶ, ἐξανθίσματα*) are suffered, they draw away the sap to their own nourishment, and

[1] Rom. vi. 22. [2] Heb. xii. 15.
[3] To nip them off.

so pine and starve the grafts that they never come to good. Διὸ ἀποθέμενοι, saith St. James: we translate it, 'wherefore laying aside:'[1] perhaps it may import a little more. The whole verse is well worth the further considering, if we had time to insist upon it: it seemeth to allude throughout to the lopping off of those suckers, or superfluous branches, that hinder the prospering of grafts. As if he had said, If you desire that the holy Word of God, which is to be grafted in your hearts, should bring forth fruit to the saving of your souls, suffer not these filthy and 'naughty superfluities' of fleshly lusts to hinder the growth thereof; but off with them, away with them; and the sooner the better. That is ἀποθέμενοι ῥυπαρίαν.

I should from this point, before I had left it, (but that I have other things to speak to, and may not insist,) have pressed two things more. First, the necessity of our prayers. It is true, our endeavours are necessary: God that doth our work for us, will not do it without us. But without the assistance of his Spirit, all our endeavours are bootless; and we have no reason to presume of his assistance, if we think ourselves too good to ask it. We may not think we have done all our part toward fruit-bearing, when we have planted and watered, until we have earnestly solicited him to do his part too, in giving the increase, and crowning our endeavours with success. Secondly, a duty of thankfulness. If by his good blessing upon our prayers and endeavours we have been enabled to bring forth any fruit, such as he will

[1] James, i. 21.

graciously accept; take we heed we do not withdraw the least part of the glory of it from him, to derive it upon ourselves, or our own endeavours. *Non nobis Domine, non nobis,* 'Not unto us, O Lord,' by no means to us, 'but to thy name be the glory.'[1] Enough it is for us, that we have the comfort onward, and shall have an unmeasurable reward at the last, for the good we have done; (either of both which is infinitely more than we deserve;) but far be it from us to claim any share in the glory: let all that be to him alone. Whatsoever fruit therefore we bear, or how much soever, let us 'not be high-minded' thereupon, or take too much upon us; for we 'bear not the root, but the root beareth us;'[2] and when we have done our utmost endeavours, the fruit we bear is still the fruit of the Spirit, not the fruit of our endeavours.

2. I have dwelt long upon this first difference, not so much because it was the first, (though that sometimes falleth out to be the best excuse we are able to make for such prolixities,) as because it is the most material, as arising from the different nature of the things spoken of: whereas the three that follow are rather verbal, arising but from the different manner of the apostle's expressions in respect of the words. The first whereof (the second of the whole four) is, that the evil effects proceeding from the flesh are called by the name of 'works;' and the good effects proceeding from the Spirit are called by the name of 'fruits.' The query is, why, being both effects alike, they are not either both alike called works, or both alike called fruits; but the one works, the other

[1] Psalm cxv. 1. [2] Rom. xi. 18.

fruit;—the works of the flesh there, here the fruit of the Spirit?

For answer whereunto, I shall propose to your choice two conjectures. The one more theological, or rather metaphysical, which is almost as new to me as perhaps it will seem to you; (for it came not into my thoughts till I was upon it;) the other more moral and popular. For the former, take it thus. Where the immediate agent produceth a work or effect, *virtute propriâ,* by his own power, and not in the virtue of a superior agent, both the work itself produced, and the efficacy of the operation whereby it is produced, are to be ascribed to him alone; so as it may be said properly and precisely to be his work. But where the immediate agent operateth *virtute alienâ,* in the strength and virtue of some higher agent, without which he were not able to produce the effect, though the work done may even there also be attributed in some sort to the inferior and subordinate agent, as the immediate cause, yet the efficacy whereby it was wrought cannot be so properly imputed to him, but ought rather to be ascribed to that higher agent in whose virtue he did operate.

The application will make it somewhat plainer. In all human actions, whether good or bad, the will of man is the immediate agent: so that whether we commit a sin, or do a good work, inasmuch as it proceedeth from our free wills, the work is still our work. But herein is the difference between good and evil actions; the will (which is naturally in this depraved estate, corrupt and fleshly) operateth by its own power alone for the producing of a sinful action, without any co-operation at all

(as was said already) of God or his Holy Spirit: and therefore the sin so produced is to be ascribed to the fleshly will, as to the sole and proper cause thereof, and may therefore very rightly be said to be the work of the flesh. But in the producing of any action that is spiritually good, the will operateth only as a subordinate agent to the grace of the Holy Spirit, and in the power and virtue thereof; and therefore, although the good work may in some sort be said to be our work, because immediately produced by our wills, yet it is in truth the fruit of that Spirit, and not of our wills, because it is wrought by the power of that Spirit, and not by any power of our wills: 'Nevertheless, not I, but the grace of God with me.'[1]

If this seem but a subtlety, and satisfy not, let it go; the other I presume will, being it is so plain and popular. The word fruit mostly relateth to some labour going before: "*Hoc fructûs pro labore ab his fero,*" in the poet.[2] So in the Scriptures, 'Nevertheless this is the fruit of my labour.'[3] 'The husbandman that first laboureth, must be partaker of the fruit:'[4] labour first, and then fruit. That which David calleth the labour of the hands— 'Thou shalt eat the labour of thy hands,'[5] Solomon calleth the fruit the hands—'Give her of the fruit of her hands.'[6]

The reason is, because no man would willingly undergo any toil or labour to no end; he would have something or other in his eye that might in some measure recompence his pains; and that is called 'the fruit of his labour.' Tully therefore

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 10.
[2] Terent. Adelph. v. 4.
[3] Phil. i. 22.
[4] 2 Tim. ii. 6.
[5] Psalm cxxviii. 2.
[6] Prov. xxxi. 31.

joineth *præmium* and *fructum* together,[1] as importing the same thing. 'Who planteth a vineyard but in the hope to eat of the fruit of it?'[2] Or what husbandman would plough and sow, and plant and prune, and dig and dung, if he did not hope to find it all answered again, and when he cometh to get in the fruits? The first question in every man's thoughts, when he is importuned to any thing of labour and business, is, *Ecquid erit pretii?*[3] Will it be worth my labour? What benefit shall I reap by it? What will be the fruit of my pains?

In all deliberations, where two ways are offered to our choice, wisdom would that we should first weigh, as advisedly and exactly as we can, the labour and the fruit of the one against the other; and as we find those, rightly compared, to be more or less, to make our resolutions accordingly. We are called on hard on both sides: God commandeth us to serve him; Satan and the world solicit us to the service of sin. Promises there are, or intimations, of fruit, on both sides: salvation to our souls on the one side, satisfaction to our lusts on the other. Here then is our business and our wisdom, to compare what is required and what is offered on both sides; to examine on the one side first, and then the other, whether the work exceed the fruit, or the fruit the work.

Now the apostle, by the very choice of his words here, hath, after a sort, done the business, and determined the controversy to our hands. In the service of sin the toil is so great, that in comparison thereof the benefit is as nothing; and in the ser-

[1] Præmium et fructum officii repetere.—Cic.
[2] 1 Cor. ix. 7.
[3] Ennius.

vice of God the benefit so great, that in comparison thereof the pains is as nothing. Where the flesh ruleth all, the work exceedeth the fruit; and therefore, without ever mentioning the fruit, they are called 'the works of the flesh.' But where the Spirit of God ruleth, the fruit exceedeth the work; and therefore, without ever mentioning the work, it is called 'the fruit of the Spirit.'

If in this passage only this different manner of speaking had been used by the apostle, it might perhaps have been taken for a casual expression, unsufficient to ground any collection upon; but look into Eph. v. and you cannot doubt but it was done of choice, and with this very meaning. Speaking there of the duties of holiness, even as here, without any mention of work, he calleth them by the name of fruit: 'The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.'[1] But by and by, speaking of sinful actions, he doth not only call them works, as he doth here, but positively and expressly pronounceth them fruitless: 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness;'[2] works, but without fruit; 'unfruitful works of darkness.' This justifieth the collection to be evident, and natural, and without enforcement. The ways of sin are very toilsome, yet withal unfruitful; but in all spiritual labour there is profit: the fruit will countervail the pains, and recompence it abundantly.

The paths of sin seem indeed, at the first hand, and in the entrance, to be very pleasant and even. The devil, to draw men in, goeth before like a leveller, and smootheth the way for them; but

[1] Eph. v. ix.

[2] Ibid. verse xi.

when they are in, he driveth them along, and on they must: be the way never so dark and slippery, never so crooked or craggy, never so intricate and perplexed, being once engaged they must go through it, *per saxa, per ignes,* stick at nothing (be it never so contrary to the laws of God or men, to all natural, civil, or religious obligations; yea, even to the principles of common humanity and reason) that avarice, ambition, revenge, or any other vicious lust putteth them upon. 'We have wearied ourselves in the way of wickedness and destruction, we have gone through dangerous ways,'[1] &c. They confess it at last, when it is too late, and befool themselves for it. 'They have wearied themselves to work iniquity,'[2] saith the prophet Jeremiah; and the prophet Habakkuk, 'The people labour in the very fire.'[3] The Greek word that signifieth wickedness, cometh of another that signifieth labour, πονηρὸς of πόνος. And how often in the Scriptures do we meet with such-like phrases as these, 'to work wickedness,' 'workers of iniquity,' &c. St. Chrysostom's eloquence enlargeth itself, and triumpheth in this argument more frequently, and with greater variety of invention and amplification, than in almost any other; and he cleareth it often, and beyond all exception, both by Scripture and reason, that the life of a wicked or worldly man is a very drudgery, infinitely more toilsome, vexatious, and unpleasant, than a godly life is.

Now, if after all this toiling, the fruit (though but in a scant proportion) answer the pains, it were the more tolerable: but there is no such matter; the sinner hath but his labour for his pains.

[1] Wisd. v. 7. [2] Jer. ix. 5. [3] Hab. ii. 13.

Nay, I may say, it were happy for him if he had but his labour for his pains; and that there were not a worse matter yet behind. The best they can hope in the mean time is nothing but vanity, and vanity is nothing. 'Man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain,'[1] saith David. The work, disquietness; the fruit, vanity. 'The people labour in the very fire,'[2] you heard but now from the prophet: his very next words are 'they weary themselves for very vanity.' St. Peter therefore calleth the conversation of sinners 'a vain conversation.'[3] And St. Paul putteth the question home to their consciences, after a short challenging them to answer directly to it, if they could, 'What fruit had you then in those things?'[4]

No great reason is there then, if we well consider it, why we should envy sinners, though they prosper never so much in wicked designs, and seem to reap the fruit of their labours, in the success of their affairs. All temporal advantages of wealth, honour, power, pleasure, and the like, which are the utmost fruit that a sinner can fancy to himself of all his labour, have but a show and semblance; not the truth and reality of fruit. Both because in the meantime they give not that satisfaction in the enjoyment, which was desired and expected from them in the pursuit; as they write of 'the apples of Sodom,' that look very fair and full, and tempt the eye, but as soon as touched, *fatiscunt in vagum pulverum;*[5] resolve all into dust and smoke; as also because they have a very ill farewell with them at the last. Honey in the mouth perhaps, (and that

[1] Psalm xxxix. 6.
[2] Hab. ii. 13.
[3] 1 Pet. i. 18.
[4] Rom. vi. 21.
[5] Solin. cap. xxxviii. Contacta cinerescunt. Tert. Apol. c. xl.

but perhaps neither,) but gall certainly in the stomach, if not rather rank poison: know they not it will be bitterness in the end;—shame, sorrow, and bitter repentance? And that is the best end imaginable of such bad beginnings. But without repentance, eternal death and damnation not to be avoided: 'for the end of those things, used and continued in, is death.'[1]

Let us not therefore neither envy their prosperity, nor yet follow their example. Wherefore should we 'lay out our money for that which is not bread, or our labour for that which satisfieth not,'[2] when we may drive a far easier trade with far more profit another way—have less toil, and yet reap more fruit? And that is by walking in the holy ways of God, and taking upon us the yoke of Christ. That, we are told, is an easy yoke, at least in comparison of the other, (that of Satan,) and a light burden:[3] and we have no reason to disbelieve it, Truth itself having told us so. Especially considering, that he putteth under the shoulder himself also, and, by helping to bear with us, beareth off in a manner the whole weight from us, leaving no more for us to carry, than by the strength he giveth us he knoweth we are well able to bear, if we will but put to our good wills, and use that strength.[4] Nay, do but compare the works themselves, and you must conclude that his commandments are more equitable and less grievous than are the imperious commands of our own raging and exorbitant lusts.[5] Will not any reasonable man, upon the hearing of the names of the

[1] Rom. vi. 21. [2] Isa. lv. i. [3] Mat. xi. 30.
[4] 1 Cor. x. 13. [5] 1 John, v. 3.

things only, presently yield that love, and joy, and peace, and gentleness, (for example,) which are fruits of the Spirit, are far more lovely and desirable, more easy and delightful, fuller of sweetness and calmness, less toilsome and vexatious, than are hatreds, and debates, and emulations, and seditions, and murders, and those other works of the flesh.

Now if, as the task is easier, so the benefit be greater, what can excuse our folly, if we do not give up ourselves to be ordered by the guidance of the Spirit in every thing, rather than yield to satisfy the lusts of the flesh in any thing? And the benefit is greater:—'A sure reward,' saith Solomon; 'for God is not unrighteous to forget your labour' of faith and love. 'A great reward,' saith David; and that many times for a very little work done; 'the giving of a cup of cold water' to refresh a thirsty soul, shall not want its reward.[1] It is our apostle's advice elsewhere, that we should 'always abound in the work of the Lord:' and that upon this very ground, 'forasmuch as you know,' saith he, 'that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'[2] If we labour in his work, we shall find the fruit of it in time.

Only let us be content to stay the time; and not to be thrusting in the sickle before the corn be half ripe. The husbandman, when he hath done his work in earing and sowing, doth not look to receive the precious fruits of the earth into his garners again the next day, or the next month; but he hath long patience for it;[3] and whether it chance to be

[1] Prov. xi. 18; Heb. vi. 10; Psal. xix. 11; Matt. x. 42.
[2] 1 Cor. xv. ult. [3] James, v. 7.

an early harvest, or a late harvest, he waiteth still, and taketh the season as it falleth. Even so 'have we need of patience, that after we have done the will of God,'[1] and suffered according to the will of God, 'we may receive the promised reward: for in due time we shall reap, if we faint not.'[2] The final reward is sure—it will come at last, and not fail us: and it is so great withal, that when it cometh it will abundantly recompense all our work, yea, and our patience too.[3]

Nay, let me say, if that reward were not, nor any other world to come, yet the fruit we reap in the mean time, even in this world from a godly life, is incomparably greater than any that the works of the flesh can yield us. Even in the judgment of heathen men, virtue ever carrieth its reward with it, as being *bonum propter se expetendum,* a thing to be desired and embraced for its own worth, without respect to any further reward. And certainly the evenness of the mind, and vacuity from those secret lashes, those horrors and fears that haunt a guilty conscience; and the sweet comfort and complacency that a righteous soul findeth in the sincere performance of his bounden duty to God and man, in eschewing evil and doing good, is a fruit infinitely more valuable than all the pleasures and sensualities of a wicked life. How happy then is he, that truly serveth God; who both hath 'his fruit in holiness' onward, (that is 'the hundred-fold' in this life,) and shall in the end have 'everlasting life' to boot.[4]

3. There are, of the four differences proposed,

[1] Heb. x. 36. [2] Gal. vi. 9. [3] Heb. x. 37.
[4] Rom. vi. 22; Mark, x. 30.

two more yet behind; which I must dispatch in few words. The third is, that the works of the flesh are spoken of as many, ἔργα, 'works,' in the plural; but the fruit of the Spirit is spoken of as one, κάρπος, 'fruit,' in the singular. Many works, but one fruit. There is such a connection of virtues and graces, that albeit they differ in their objects and natures, yet they are inseparable in the subject. As when many links make up one chain, pull one, and pull all: so he that hath any one spiritual grace in any degree of truth and eminency, cannot be utterly destitute of any other. But as for sins and vices, it is not so with them: they are not only distinct in their kinds, natures, and definitions, (for so are virtues too,) but they may also be divided from one another, and parted asunder in respect of the subject wherein they are. We are told, (and if we were not told it, we could not but see reason enough in these times to believe it,) that a man may hate idolatry, a work of the flesh; and yet love sacrilege well enough, a work of the flesh too.[1] There is no necessity that a swearer should be an adulterer, or an adulterer a slanderer, or a slanderer an oppressor, or an oppressor a drunkard, or a drunkard a seditious person; and so of many other.

The reason of the difference is, because all spiritual graces look one way: they all run to the same indivisible point, wherein they concentre; to wit, almighty God, who is *bonum incommutabile*, unchangeable and one: even as all moral virtues concentre in the same common point of right reason. But sins, which turn from God to follow the

[1] Rom. ii. 22.

creature, and vices, which are so many deviations from the rule of right reason, do not all necessarily run towards the same point, but may have their several tendencies different one from another. Because though God be one, yet the creatures are manifold; and although the straight way from one place to another can be but one, yet there may be many crooked turnings, by-paths, and deviations. Even as truth is but one and certain, but errors are manifold and endless.

The Spirit of God, whose fruits these are, is first a renewing Spirit. It createth a new heart in a man, whereby he becometh a kind of new creature:[1] it disposeth him to obedience. And true obedience is copulative: it submitteth to the commander's will entirely; it doth not pick and choose. The Spirit of God is secondly a holy Spirit; (the holy Spirit of discipline;) and such a holy Spirit will not brook to 'dwell in a soul that is subject to sin.'[2] It will endure no such inmate: they can no more dwell together than light can fellow with darkness. But where any grace is wanting, there must needs be the contrary sin to fill up the vacuity: and therefore where that holy Spirit is, there cannot be a total defect of any holy grace. The Spirit of God is also a loving Spirit, and sheddeth abroad the love of God in every heart it taketh possession of.[3] And love is so comprehensive a grace, that it includeth all the rest; and so is in effect 'the fulfilling of the whole law.'[4] There is a thread of love that runneth through all the particu-

[1] Psalm, li. 10; Gal. vi. 15.
[2] Wisd. i. 4, 5.
[3] Rom. v. 5.
[4] Rom. xiii. 10.

lar duties and offices of the Christian life, and stringeth them like so many rich pearls into one chain.[1]

A consideration not unuseful, to quicken our care for the subduing of every sinful lust, and our endeavour to have every grace of the Spirit habituated in us; knowing that so long as we allow ourselves in any one sin, suffer any one lust of the flesh to remain in us unsubdued, (at least in respect of desire and endeavour,) there cannot be any one true grace of God in us. There are certain common graces of illumination, which are the effects also of God's Spirit, and are therefore called πνευματικὰ, 'spiritual gifts:'[2] and those indeed are given by dole. Knowledge to one, to another tongues, to another healings, miracles, &c. all 'by the same Spirit,' manifesting himself to sundry persons in sundry kinds and measures, and 'dividing to every one severally as he will.'[3] But it is nothing so in the special graces of sanctification: there is no distribution or division here. Either all or none. He that certainly wanteth any one (at least in the desire and endeavour) may justly suspect that all those he seemeth to have are but so many counterfeits. All this variety of graces maketh but one fruit.

4. The last difference is, that the works of the flesh are expressly said 'to be manifest;'[4] but no such thing is affirmed of the fruit of the Spirit. The most probable reasons of which difference are, to my seeming, one of these two following. First, the commonness and frequency of those above

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. throughout. [2] 1 Cor. xii. 1; xiv. 1.
[3] 1 Cor. xii. 8—10. [4] Ibid, verse 19.

these every where abroad in the world. The works of the flesh, 'adultery, fornication, uncleanness, wantonness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatreds, emulation, debate, wrath, strifes, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, gluttony, drunkenness, and such like,' (I name them, because the bare recital of them will save me the labour of further proof,) do so abound in all places, that you can scarce look beside them. Turn your eyes which way you will, ye shall see cursed examples of some or other of these every day, and in every street, and every corner. Alas, the works of the flesh are but too 'manifest!'

But the fruits of the Spirit are not so. 'Love, peace, gentleness, faith, meekness, temperance,' and the rest,—these are very thin grown in the world; they are rarities not every where to be met withal. Insomuch as David, complaining, crieth out, 'There is not one godly man left. There is none that doeth good, no, not one.'[1] And the prophet Jeremiah, when he had 'run to and fro in the streets of Jerusalem' for the purpose, to find 'a man that executed judgment, and sought after truth,'[2] when he had employed his legs, and his eyes, and his tongue in search, he could not yet find the man he looked for. Hips and haws grow in every hedge, when choicer fruits are but in some few gardens; and every soil almost yields stones and rubbish, but gold and precious stones are found in very few places.

Secondly, the works of the flesh may be said to be manifest, and the fruits of the Spirit not so, with respect to our judgments of them, and the easiness of discerning the one sort more than the other.

[1] Psalm xii. xiv. [2] Jer. v. 1, &c.

The works of the flesh are so manifestly evil, that no man of common sense can lightly be mistaken in them. Murder, sedition, drunkenness, adultery—it is not possible any man should be of such gross understanding, as to imagine they should be the fruits of God's holy Spirit: they are undoubtedly, and manifestly, to every man's apprehension, 'the works of the flesh.' But, as for 'the fruits of the Spirit,' they are not so 'manifest,' but that a man, who hath not his senses very well exercised to the discerning of good and evil,[1] may be easily deceived therein. Hyprocrisy is spun oftentimes of a very fine thread: and the heart of man abounding with so much 'hypocrisy' as it doth, and so much self-love and uncharitableness withal, is the most deceitful thing (yea, and the most deceivable too; actively and passively both) of any thing in the world.[2] There are on the one side, so many mock graces, and specious counterfeits, that carry a semblance of spiritual fruit, but are not the things they seem to be; and, on the other side, inordinate love of ourselves partly, and partly want of charity towards our brethren, have so disposed us to a capacity of being deceived, that it is no wonder, if in passing our judgments (especially where ourselves are concerned) we be very much and very often mistaken. It might rather be a wonder, if we should not be sometimes mistaken.

As most errors claim to be a little akin to some truths, so most vices challenge a kind of affinity to some virtue. Not so much from any proper intrinsical true resemblance they have with such virtues, as by reason of the common opposition they both

[1] Heb. v. 14. [2] Jer. xvii. 9.

have to one and the same contrary vice. As prodigality hath some overly likeness with liberality, and so may hap to be mistaken for it, for no other cause but this only, that they are both contrary to covetousness. Ἡ μὲν ἀπάτη ἐκ τῆς ὁμοιότητος, saith Aristotle truly: fallacy and deception, for the most part, arise from the appearance of some likeness or similitude; when things that are like, but not the same, are taken to be the same, because they are like. They that have given us marks of sincerity for the trial of our graces, have not been able to give us any certain rules or infallible characters, whereby to try the sincerity of those marks, so as to remove all doubtings and possibility of erring.

Whence, I suppose, I may safely infer, that the certainty of a man's present standing in grace, but much more then of his eternal future salvation, (although I doubt not but by the mercy of God it may be attainable in this life, and that without extraordinary revelation, in such a measure as may sustain the soul of an honest Christian with comfort,) is not yet either so absolutely necessary, nor so void of fears and doubtings, as some perhaps have imagined.

Not so necessary but that a man may be saved without it. Many a good soul, no doubt, there is in the world, that out of the experience of the falseness of his own heart, and the fear of self-deceit, and the sense of his own unworthiness, could never yet attain to be so well persuaded of the sincerity of his own repentance, faith, and obedience, as to think that God would approve of it, and accept it. The censure were very hard, and a great violation it would be of charity I am sure, (and I think of truth also,) to pronounce such a man to be out of

the state of salvation; or to call such his dispersuasion by the name of despair, and under that name to condemn it. There is a common, but a great mistake in this matter. Despair is far another manner of thing than many take it for. When a man thinketh himself so incapable of God's pardon, that he groweth thereupon, "regardless of all duties,"[1] and neither careth what he doth nor what shall become of him; when he is once come to this resolution, "I know God will never forgive me, and therefore I will never trouble myself to seek his favour in vain;" this is to run a desperate course indeed; this is properly the sin of despair. But, when the fear that God hath not yet pardoned him, prompteth him to better resolutions, and exciteth him to a greater care of repentance and newness of life, and maketh him more diligent in the performance of all holy duties, that so he may be the more capable of pardon, it is so far from being any way prejudicial to his eternal salvation, that it is the readiest way to secure it.

But where the greatest certainty is, that can be attained to in this life by ordinary means, it is not ordinarily (unless perhaps to some few persons at the very hour of death) so perfect as to exclude all doubtings. 'The fruits of the Spirit,' where they are true and sincere, being but imperfect in this life; and the truth and sincerity of them being not always so manifest but that a man may sometimes be deceived in his judgment concerning the same; it can hardly be, what between the one and the other—the imperfection of the thing, and the diffi-

[1] — desperatione meliorum, hærere prioribus.—Hier. Epist. 46.

culty of judging—but that the assurance, which is wholly grounded thereupon, and can therefore have no more strength than they can give it, must be subject to fears, jealousies, and doubtings.

I speak not this to shake any man's comfort, (God forbid,) but to stir up every man's care to abound and increase so much the more in all 'godliness,' and in 'the fruits of the Spirit; by giving all diligence,'[1] by walking in the Spirit and subduing the lusts of the flesh, 'to make his calling and election sure.' Sure in itself, that he fail not of salvation in the end; and sure to him also, as far as he can, that his comfort may be the greater and sounder in the mean time.

Now, the God of all grace and glory, send the Spirit of his Son plentifully into our hearts, that we may abound in the fruits of godly living, to the praise of his grace, our present comfort in this life, and the eternal salvation of our souls in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[1] 2 Pet. i. 5.

SERMON X.

THE HOLY GHOST A COMFORTER.

BY BISHOP HORNE.

[GEORGE HORNE was born in the year 1730. In 1768 he was made President of Magdalen College, Oxford; and in 1790 was consecrated Bishop of Norwich. He died in 1792.]

SERMON X.

JOHN, XIV. 16.

I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for

THE words present to us, in a little compass, what it is the design of the Scripture to describe at large, namely, the sacred Three united in the work of man's redemption. Here is the Son interceding, the Father granting, and the Spirit coming, as upon this day, to form the church, and ever after to preserve and sanctify it: 'I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.'

It is impossible to cast the subject into a better method than that offered by the words themselves, as they stand in the text. They direct us to consider,

I. The prayer of Christ: 'I will pray the Father.'

When we read of the Son praying, we may be induced to think, that the person praying must necessarily be inferior to the person to whom prayer

is made. We shall reason as the apostle elsewhere does: 'Without all doubt, the greater is entreated by the less.' It is God who is entreated; it is a man who entreats: 'there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man,' who is a man. He is so; but it is 'the man Christ Jesus;' it is a man, very differently circumstanced from all other men that ever were born, and far above them all: it is a man, to whom God was pleased to be united. God was in Christ; in him dwelt all the fulness of the godhead bodily; God manifest in the flesh; the Divine Word made flesh, and dwelling among us; as, to prefigure this great event in old time, Jehovah came down from heaven, and filled the holy temple, built for his reception. 'Destroy this temple,' says Christ, speaking of his body, 'and I (as God—for God only could do so,) will raise it again in three days.'

The truth is, they who differ from us, and oppose us, upon this great point, affirm Christ to be man, which we never deny; but they cannot, while allowing the Scripture, disprove his being likewise God, which is what we affirm.—"God and man are one Christ," as our church teaches us rightly to confess.

While therefore it is a man who mediates, intercedes, and prays, it is this circumstance of his being a man in whom God dwells, and to whom God is, in an especial manner, united, which gives to his mediation, his intercession, his prayer, that virtue and effect, that force and power, which otherwise they could not have; for what, I beseech you, is the prayer of a man, a mere man, however upright and pure, that it should prevail for the pardon of all other men, being sinners, and obtain for them

from the Father, the gift of the Holy Spirit? And for this reason it is that they who deny the doctrine of our Lord's divinity, have been forced to deny also that of his priesthood and intercession.

If we look forward to the 15th chapter of St. John's Gospel, ver. 26, we find the same person, who says, in the words of the text, 'I will pray the Father, and he shall send a Comforter'—we find him uttering these words: 'The Comforter whom I will send from the Father.' He therefore who, in one capacity, prays that the Comforter may be sent, in another is the person who sends him, being joined in authority and power with the Father. 'He and the Father are one.' Many are the passages of this kind, which can be explained and reconciled on no other principle but that adopted and maintained by the church, concerning the twofold nature of Christ. The Spirit is called, in some places, 'the Spirit of the Father;'[1] in others, 'the Spirit of the Son;'[2] he proceedeth from both.

How pleasing, how comfortable a consideration is it, that we have an Intercessor on high, through whose prayer to the Father, not only the good things of this world, redeemed from the curse by him who first created them, and made again salutary and holy, are granted to us anew; but we receive also the great, the supreme, the unspeakable gift, the gift of the divine Spirit, one with the Father and the Son, blessed and glorified for evermore!

II. From the Son praying, let us, therefore, turn our | thoughts to the Father granting: 'I will pray the Father, and he shall give you.' When a

[1] Matt. x. 12. [2] Gal. iv. 6.

Son asks, a Father can give: the one is gracious to prevail, the other easy to be entreated. The request was not preferred in a cold and languid manner. 'He made supplication,' as the apostle speaks, 'with strong crying and tears.' And still louder was the voice of his blood from the earth, 'speaking better things than that of Abel;' the one crying for mercy, as the other did for vengeance.

III. The gift thus requested and obtained was that of a Comforter: 'I will pray the Father, and he shall give you a Comforter.'

With respect to the apostle, this was a gift eminently in season. Various, as we know, are the powers and favours of the Spirit, suited to the various wants of mankind. To those who are ignorant, he is the Spirit of knowledge; to those who are perplexed with doubts and difficulties, he is the Spirit of Truth; to those polluted by sin, he is the Spirit of holiness. But the apostles, at the time when our Lord spoke these words, were in a state of melancholy; sorrow had filled their hearts; comfort was that of which they stood in need; comfort was promised, and, as upon this day, a Comforter was sent. Grief chills the heart, and congeals the spirits; he descended therefore in fire, to warm and to expand: he descended in the form of tongues, bringing the word of consolation, that good word which maketh glad the heart of man. The effect appeared accordingly; for in such a manner was the sorrow of the apostles turned into joy, that when they preached the gospel to the people assembled from different countries, their adversaries said, 'These men are full of new wine.' But it was not the juice of the grape; in that age

and in that country none being accustomed, as St. Peter observed, to drink wine in a morning:—'These men are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour in the day,' or nine o'clock, for they began their reckoning from six. It was therefore wine (to use our Lord's expression,) which they had drank new in the kingdom of God; they were filled with the Holy Ghost, with spiritual comfort, spiritual joy, and exultation. Instead of fearing and flying from their enemies, as before, at the apprehension and crucifixion of their Master, they now boldly faced them, prepared to stand before rulers, 'to speak of God's testimonies even before kings, without being ashamed.' They were no longer grieved or offended at the thought of suffering for the truth; they rejoiced in tribulation of that sort, and conceived themselves to have acquired a new dignity, when 'counted worthy so to suffer.' Such was the mighty change wrought in their minds, through the power of 'the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.'

A change is wrought in the minds of Christians, through every age, by the power of the same divine Spirit.

On the ministers of the gospel he does not indeed confer, immediately and by miracle, the gift of divers languages; but it is he who inclines them to learn languages, for the purpose of understanding the Scriptures; to apply themselves carefully and conscientiously to the studies and duties of their profession; to preach with force and effect that word which is in the hearts of men as fire, enlightening the dark, warning the cold, melting the hard, and purifying the defiled. It is he who 'gives them the tongue of the learned,' who both dis-

poses and enables them 'to speak a word in season to him that is weary,' and stands in need of consolation, till 'in the midst of the sorrows that are in his heart heavenly comforts refresh his soul.' Our commission is the same with that of our blessed Master, which he opened at Nazareth, in the words of Isaiah: 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Sion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.'

What a variety of sublime and beautiful expressions is here employed to show that our gospel, as it proceeds from the Holy Ghost the Comforter, is, and must ever be, a gospel of comfort!

But to whom is it such? To many it is not; they find no comfort in it; they hate and dread the sight or the thought of it. It is such only to the poor in spirit, to the meek, and to the mourners; to those who have been made sensible of their fallen estate, and of the sins they have committed; to those who, by true repentance, have cast out and put away their sins from them; to these it is a cordial indeed: but a cordial can be of no service, it will be of much disservice, if administered (should any unskilfully administer it) when the habit is loaded with humours, and the stomach overwhelmed and oppressed by crudities. A cordial here is not the

remedy immediately wanted; proper discipline must prepare the way for it.

The Spirit comforts by strengthening; as the word, in our language, intimates. He is the Spirit of power, might, and courage, which are conferred upon us, in our due degree and measure, as they were upon the apostles. When convinced of the truth, we are no longer afraid to confess, to defend, or to practise it before men, even the greatest men. We are not ashamed of being singular at any time in doing our duty, nor offended and grieved because we cannot have the approbation of those whose approbation is not worth having; since of what consequence to a wise man is the opinion of such, as he thinks and knows to be, in this particular matter, not wise? Tongues were given to be employed in speech; and they should be employed (by the ministers of Christ more especially) with all freedom and boldness, in telling the people of their sins, calling them to repentance, and proclaiming to all the gospel of pardon and peace.

Such is the gift prayed for by the Son, and bestowed on the church by the Father: 'I will pray the Father, and he shall give you a Comforter.'

IV. He is styled, in the text, 'another Comforter.' While Christ continued to be present in person with his disciples, he was their Comforter. But, as he had informed them, he was about to leave them; to ascend into that glory from whence he descended; 'the glory he had with the Father, before the world was;' the church, therefore, would find herself in a melancholy, forlorn, and widowed state.—'How can the children of the bridechamber fast,' (or mourn,) said he, 'while the bride-

groom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they mourn in those days.' The days immediately following Christ's ascension, were to be days of darkness and sorrow, of great tribulation and severe persecution, first from Jews and then from Gentiles. The disciples must have sunk under a trial like this, the church must have failed in its very beginning, and the gospel have perished from among men, had it not been for the promise and the grant of another Comforter, or advocate, as the world also signifies.

It was expedient that Christ should go away; that he should go into heaven, to appear in the presence of God for us, and to be our advocate there, to answer the slanders and calumnies of the great accuser of the brethren, who accuseth them before the throne: that he should not only do this, but rescue and save us, even when the accusation was true. 'There is one that accuseth you,' said Christ, even 'Moses.' The law accuses and condemns us all, because we all have broken it, and are become guilty before God, as a Lawgiver and a Judge. But what saith mercy, by the gospel? 'Deliver the man; I have found a ransom.' Christ was first our priest; he offered himself a sacrifice for our sins; and then went, with his own blood, into the holy places, to make atonement for those, as sinners, whose innocence, otherwise, as advocate, he could not defend. On this foot he went, to reinstate us in the favour of God; to take possession of heaven for us, as our surety and representative, 'the first-born among many brethren;' to prepare a place for us against that great and joyful day,

when he shall return in like manner as he went, to receive us to himself, that where he is, there we may be also.

In the meantime, while this was doing above, there was need of another advocate, or Comforter, below; and he supplied the absence of his body, by the presence of his Spirit; so that in all our troubles, under every possible calamity that can befal us, there is help at hand, both in heaven and on earth; in heaven, Christ mediating; on earth, the Spirit comforting. Of this latter it is said, that he also 'maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered;' praying with us, and in us, 'bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God,' adopted sons, redeemed from the world, and evidenced to be so, by the testimony of a conscience purged from sin, through faith, and the Spirit of holiness. 'My conscience,' says the apostle, 'beareth me witness in the Holy Ghost;' an expression which answers exactly to that other—'The Spirit witnesseth with our spirit that we are the children of God.'

We come now to the last clause in my text: 'I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.'

We may consider this as spoken by Christ of the Holy Spirit, in contradistinction to himself. I go away, but he shall abide. The enjoyment of good, when obtained, may be, and generally is, damped and diminished, by the apprehension of losing it again. The disciples found that their blessed Master was about to be taken from them. They might fear the same respecting this other Comforter, who was promised, lest he too should,

after a while, forsake them. But this was not to happen. The Son vouchsafed to descend from heaven for a certain purpose, and for a certain time necessary to accomplish that purpose: then he returned back to his celestial mansion. Though the disciples had known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth they were to know him so no more. The office graciously sustained by the Spirit, in the scheme of man's redemption, requires his constant abode and superintendence. Of the perpetuity of his influence, we are therefore assured, 'to our great and endless comfort.'

And herein it is, that heavenly comforts differ from earthly ones. These may be used for a time; but they perish with the using, and we must look for others. Riches make themselves wings: of a still more uncertain tenure are fame and honour; and pleasures are more fleeting than either. They flutter about us, for a little while in the season of health and prosperity. But the day of sickness and trouble must come; and then, where are they, or what can they avail? Between us and the world the curtain will be soon drawn for ever; the things of the world can be of no further concern or service. To the mind's eye will appear, above, the Judge in glory; below, the earth in flames. Pain will distract, conscience will accuse, and friends will forsake. The man of the world, looking round on those perishing idols, whom he has worshipped, and to whom he has sacrificed his eternal interests, will exclaim, in the anguish of despair—may no person here present ever know it but by description—'Surely, miserable comforters are ye all!'

In such comforters, therefore, put not your trust, for they will undoubtedly fail you in time of need.

They are winter brooks, overflowing when there is least occasion; but, in the burning heat of summer, the thirsty traveller, who has recourse to them for the relief of his necessity, finds them dry. Nay, when they are with you in their highest perfection, their insufficiency is ever experienced, though it may not be owned. No circle of pleasure is so complete as not to leave a frightful void, to supply which something of a far different and superior kind is required. This has been repeatedly, and in sorrow of heart, complained of, by persons possessing all that the world could give them, and finding nothing more of that sort to ask or desire; yet has their existence become so wretched, that many of them have been tempted, and some prevailed upon, so far as lay in their power, to put a period to it; confessing themselves weary of treading the round of dissipation and insignificance, and willing rather to risk the torments of another world, than sustain the miseries of this, with all its enjoyments full blown before them.

Seek then for comforts, which never fatigue, or cloy; for comforts which, like the manna bestowed on the church in the wilderness, come down from heaven fresh every morning as they are wanted, suited to every taste, and satisfying every capacity. Seek for comforts which abide for ever, attending you through sickness, pain, age, and death, to that land of promise, where the manna ceases to descend, only because you are admitted to the presence of him from whom it descended, and the streams become needless, when you can drink at the fountain.

SERMON XI.

OF GROWTH IN GRACE.

BY BISHOP TAYLOR.

[JEREMY TAYLOR was born in 1613. At the Restoration, in 1660, he was appointed to the bishopric of Down and Connor. He died in 1667.]

SERMON XI.

2 PETER, III. 18.

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

PART I.

WHEN Christianity, like the day-spring from the east, with a new light, did not only enlighten the world, but amazed the minds of men, and entertained their curiosities, and seized on their warmer and more pregnant affections, it was no wonder that whole nations were converted at a sermon, and multitudes were instantly professed, and their understandings followed their affections, and their wills followed their understandings, and they were convinced by miracle, and overcome by grace, and passionate with zeal, and wisely governed by their guides, and ravished with the sanctity of the doctrine, and the holiness of their examples. And this was not only their duty, but a great instance of providence, that by the great religion and piety of the first professors, Christianity might be

firmly planted, and unshaken by scandal, and hardened by persecution ; and that these first lights might be actual precedents for ever, and copies for us to transcribe in all descending ages of Christianity, that thither we might run to fetch oil to enkindle our extinguished lamps. But then piety was so universal, that it might well be enjoined by St. Paul, that 'if a brother walked disorderly,' the Christians should avoid his company: he forbade them not to accompany with the heathens that walked disorderly, 'for then a man must have gone out of the world ;' but they were not to endure so much as 'to eat with,' or 'to salute a disorderly brother' and ill-living Christian. But now, if we should observe this canon of St. Paul, and refuse to eat or to converse with a fornicator, or a drunkard, or a perjured person, or covetous, we must also 'go out of the world :' for a pious or a holy person is now as rare as a disorderly Christian was at first; and as Christianity is multiplied every where in name and title, so it is destroyed in life, essence, and proper operation: and we have very great reason to fear, that Christ's name will serve us to no end but to upbraid our baseness, and his person only to be our judge, and his laws as so many bills of accusation, and his graces and helps offered us but as aggravations of our unworthiness, and our baptism but an occasion of vow-breach, and the holy communion but an act of hypocrisy, formality, or sacrilege, and all the promises of the gospel but as pleasant dreams, and the threatenings but as arts of affrightment. For Christianity lasted pure and zealous, it kept its rules and observed its own laws, for three hundred years, or thereabouts; so long the church remained a virgin; for so long

they were warmed with their first fires, and kept under discipline by the rod of persecution: but it hath declined almost fourteen hundred years together; prosperity and pride, wantonness and great fortunes, ambition and interest, false doctrine on mistake and on design, the malice of the devil and the arts of all his instruments, the want of zeal and a weariness of spirit, filthy examples and a disreputation of piety and a strict life, seldom precedents and infinite discouragements have caused so infinite a declension of piety and holy living, that what Papirius Massonius, one of their own, said of the popes of Rome: "No man looks for holiness in [1]the bishops of Rome; those are the best popes who are not extremely wicked:" the same is too true of the greatest part of Christians; men are excellent persons if they be not traitors, or adulterous, oppressors, or injurious, drunkards, or scandalous, if they be not 'as this publican,' as the vilest person with whom they converse.

He that is better than the dregs of his own age, whose religion is something above profaneness, and whose sobriety is a step or two from downright intemperance, whose discourse is not swearing, nor yet apt to edify, whose charity is set out in piety, and a gentle yearning and saying "God help," whose alms are contemptible, and his devotion infrequent; as things are now, he is *unus e millibus*, "one of a thousand," and he stands eminent and conspicuous in the valleys and lower grounds of the present piety; for a bank is a mountain on

[1] In pontificibus nemo hodie sanctitatem requirit; optimi putantur, si vel leviter mali sint, vel minus boni quam cæteri mortales esse solent.

a level:[1] but what is rare and eminent in the manners of men this day, would have been scandalous, and have deserved the rod of an apostle, if it had been confronted with the fervours and rare devotion and religion of our fathers in the gospel.

Men of old looked on themselves as they stood by the examples and precedents of martyrs, and compared their piety to the life of St. Paul, and estimated their zeal by flames of the Boanerges, St. James and his brother and the bishops were thought reprovable, as they fell short of the ordinary government of St. Peter and St. John; and the assemblies of Christians were so holy, that every meeting had religion enough to hallow a house, and convert it to a church; and every day of feasting was a communion, and every fasting-day was a day of repentance and alms, and every day of thanksgiving was a day of joy and alms; and religion began all their actions, and prayer consecrated them, and they ended in charity, and were not polluted with design: they despised the world heartily, and pursued after heaven greedily; they knew no ends but to serve God, and to be saved; and had no designs on their neighbours, but to lead them to God and to felicity; till Satan, full of envy to see such excellent days, mingled covetousness and ambition within the throngs and conventions of the church, and a vice crept into an office; and then the mutual confidence grew less, and so charity was lessened; and heresies crept in, and then faith began to be sullied; and pride crept in, and then men snatched at offices, not for the work,

[1] Juven. Sat. xiii. 60.

but for the dignity; and then they served themselves more than God and the church; till at last it came to that pass where now it is, that the clergy live lives no better than the laity, and the laity are stooped to imitate the evil customs of strangers and enemies of Christianity; so that we should think religion in a good condition, if that men did offer up to God but the actions of an ordinary, even, and just life, without the scandal and alloys of a great impiety. But because such is the nature of things, that either they grow towards perfection, or decline towards dissolution, there is no proper way to secure it but by setting its growth forward: for religion hath no station or natural periods; if it does not grow better it grows much worse; not that it always returns the man into scandalous sins, but that it establishes and fixes him in a state of indifference and lukewarmness; and he is more averse to a state of improvement, and dies in an incurious, ignorant, and unrelenting condition.

'But grow in grace:'—That is the remedy, and that would make us all wise and happy, blessed in this world, and sure of heaven: concerning which, we are to consider, first, what the state of grace is, into which every one of us must be entered, that we may 'grow' in it: secondly, the proper parts, acts, and offices of 'growing in grace:' thirdly, the signs, consequences, and proper significations, by which if we cannot perceive 'the growing,' yet afterwards we may perceive that 'we are grown,' and so judge of the state of our duty, and concerning our final condition of being saved.

1. Concerning the state of grace, I consider that no man can be said to be in the state of grace, who retains an affection to any one sin. The state of

pardon and the divine favour begins at the first instance of anger against our crimes, when we leave our fondnesses and kind opinions, when we excuse them not, and will not endure their shame, when we feel the smarts of any of their evil consequents: for he that is a perfect lover of sin, and is sealed up to a reprobate sense, endures all that sin brings along with it, and is reconciled to all its mischiefs: he can suffer the sickness of his own drunkenness, and yet call it pleasure; he can wait like a slave to serve his lust, and yet count it no disparagement; he can suffer the dishonour of being accounted a base and dishonest person, and yet look confidently, and think himself no worse. But when the grace of God begins to work on a man's spirit, it makes the conscience nice and tender: and although the sin, as yet, does not displease the man, but he can endure the flattering and alluring part, yet he will not endure to be used so ill by sin; he will not be abused and dishonoured by it. But because God hath so alloyed the pleasure of his sin, that he that drinks the sweet, should also strain the dregs through his throat; by degrees God's grace doth irreconcile the convert, and discovers first its base attendants, then its worse consequents, then the displeasure of God; that here commence the first resolutions of leaving the sin, and trying if, in the service of God, his spirit and the whole appetite of man may be better entertained. He that is thus far entered, shall quickly perceive the difference, and meet arguments enough to invite him further: for then God treats the man as he treated the spies, that went to discover the land of promise; he ordered the year in plenty, and directed them to a pleasant and a fruitful place, and pre-

pared bunches of grapes of a miraculous and prodigious greatness, that they might report good things of Canaan, and invite the whole nation to attempt its conquest. So God's grace represents to the new converts, and the weak ones in faith, the pleasures and first deliciousnesses of religion; and when they come to spy the good things of that way that leads to heaven, they presently perceive themselves eased of the load of an evil conscience, of their fears of death, of the confusion of their shame; and God's Spirit gives them a cup of sensible comfort, and makes them to rejoice in their prayers, and weep with pleasures mingled with innocent passion and religious changes. And although God does not deal with all men in the same method, or in manners that can regularly be described, and all men do not feel, or do not observe, or cannot, for want of skill, discern, such accidental sweetnesses and pleasant grapes at their first entrance into religion; yet God to every man does minister excellent arguments of invitation; and such that if a man will attend to them, they will certainly move either his affections or his will, his fancy or his reason, and most commonly both. But while the Spirit of God is doing this work in man, man must also be *σύνεργος τοῦ Θεοῦ*, 'a fellow-worker with God;' he must entertain the Spirit, attend his inspirations, receive his whispers, obey all his motions, invite him further, and truly renounce all confederacy with his enemy, sin; at no hand suffering any 'root of bitterness to spring up,' not allowing to himself any reserve of carnal pleasure, no clancular lust, no private oppressions, no secret covetousness, no love to this world, that may discompose his duty. For if a man prays all

day, and at night is intemperate; if he spends his time in reading, and his recreation be sinful; if he studies religion, and practises self-interest; if he leaves his swearing, and yet retains his pride; if he becomes chaste, and yet remains peevish and imperious; this man is not changed from the state of sin into the first stage of the state of grace, he does at no hand belong to God; he hath suffered himself to be scared from one sin, and tempted from another by interest, and hath left a third by reason of his inclination, and a fourth for shame or want of opportunity; but the Spirit of God hath not yet planted one perfect plant there: God may make use of the accidentally-prepared advantages; but as yet the Spirit of God hath not begun the proper and direct work of grace in his heart. But when we leave every sin, when we resolve never to return to the chains, when we have no love for the world but such as may become a servant of God; then I account that we are entered into a state of grace, from whence I am now to begin to reckon the commencement of this precept, 'Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

1. And now the first part of this duty is—to make religion to be the business of our lives: for this is the great instrument which will naturally produce our growth in grace, and the perfection of a Christian. For a man cannot, after a state of sin, be instantly a saint; the work of Heaven is not done by a flash of lightning, or a dash of affectionate rain, or a few tears of a relenting pity: God and his church have appointed holy intervals, and have taken portions of our time for religion, that we may be called off from the world, and remember the end of our creation, and do honour to God, and think of

heaven with hearty purposes and peremptory designs to get thither. But as we must not neglect those times, which God hath reserved for his service, or the church hath prudently decreed; nor yet act religion on such days with forms and outsides, or to comply with customs, or to seem religious; so we must take care, that all the other portions of our time be hallowed with little retirements of our thoughts, and short conversations with God, and all along be guided with holy intention; that even our works of nature may pass into the relations of grace, and the actions of our calling may help towards the 'obtaining the prize of our high calling;' while our eatings are actions of temperance, our labours are profitable, our humiliations are acts of obedience, and our alms of charity, and our marriages are chaste; and 'whether we eat or drink,' sleep or wake, we may, 'do all to the glory of God,' by direct intuition, or by a reflex act; by design, or by supplement; by foresight, or by an after-election. And to this purpose we must not look on religion as our trouble and our hinderance, nor think alms chargeable or expensive, nor our fastings vexatious and burdensome, nor our prayers a weariness of spirit; but we must make these and all other the duties of religion, our employment, our care, the work and end for which we came into the world; and remember that we never do the work of men, nor serve the ends of God, nor are in the proper employment and business of our life, but when we worship God, or live like wise or sober persons, or do benefit to our brother.

I will not turn this discourse into a reproof, but leave it represented as a duty. Remember that God sent you into the world for religion; we are

but to pass through our pleasant fields, or our hard labours; but to lodge a little while in our fair palaces, or our meaner cottages; but to bait in the way at our full tables, or with our spare diet: but then only man does his proper employment, when he prays and does charity, and mortifies his unruly appetites, and restrains his violent passions, and becomes like to God, and imitates his holy Son, and writes after the copies of apostles and saints. Then he is dressing himself for eternity, where he must dwell or abide, either in an excellent beatifical country, or in a prison of amazement and eternal horror: and after all this, you may, if you please, call to mind how much time you allow to God and to your souls every day, or every month, or in a year, if you please, for I fear the account of the time is soon made; but the account for the neglect will be harder; and it will not easily be answered, that all our days and years are little enough to attend perishing things, and to be swallowed up in avaricious and vain attendances; and we shall not attend to religion with a zeal so great as is our revenge, or as is the hunger of one meal. Without much time, and a wary life, and a diligent circumspection, we cannot mortify our sins, or do the first works of grace. I pray God we be not found to have grown like the sinews of old age, from strength to remissness; from thence to dissolution, and infirmity, and death. Menedemus was wont to say, "that the young boys that went to Athens, the first year were wise men, the second year philosophers, the third orators, and the fourth were but plebeians, and understood nothing but their own ignorance." And just so it happens to some in the progresses of religion; at first they are violent and active, and

then they satiate all the appetites of religion; and that which is left is, that they were soon weary, and sat down in displeasure, and return to the world, and dwell in the business of pride or money; and, by this time, they understand that their religion is declined, and passed from the heats and follies of youth to the coldness and infirmities of old age: the remedy of which is only a diligent spirit and a busy religion; a great industry, and a full portion of time in holy offices; that, as the oracle said to the Cirrhæans, *noctes diesque belligerandum*, "they could not be happy unless they waged war night and day;" so unless we perpetually fight against our own vices, and repel our ghostly enemies, and stand on our guard, we must stand for ever in the state of babes in Christ; or else return to the first imperfections of an unchristened soul, and an unsanctified spirit. That is the first particular.

2. The second step of our growth in grace is—when virtues grow habitual, apt, and easy, in our manners and dispositions: for, although many new converts have a great zeal, and a busy spirit, apt enough, as they think, to contest against all the difficulties of a spiritual life; yet they meet with such powerful oppositions from without, and a false heart within, that their first heats are soon broken; and either they are for ever discouraged, or are forced to march more slowly, and proceed more temperately for ever after. "It is an easy thing to commit a wickedness, for temptation and infirmity are always too near to us;"[1] but God hath made care and sweat, prudence and diligence, experience

[1] *Τὴν μέντοι κακότητα καὶ ἰλαδόν ἐστιν ἑλέσθαι*
Ῥηϊδίως, ὀλίγη μὲν ὁδὸς, μάλα δ' ἐγγύθι ναίει·

and watchfulness, wisdom and labour at home, and good guides abroad, to be instruments and means to purchase virtue.

The way is long and difficult at first; but in the progress and pursuit, we find all the knots made plain, and the rough ways made smooth.[1] Now the spirit of grace is like a new soul within him, and he hath new appetites and new pleasures, when the things of the world grow unsavoury, and the things of religion are delicious: when his temptations to his old crimes return but seldom, and prevail not at all, but are reproached with a penitential sorrow and speedy amendment: when we do actions of virtue quickly, frequently, and with delight, then we have grown in grace, in the same degree in which they can perceive these excellent dispositions. Some persons there are who dare not sin; they dare not omit their hours of prayer, and they are restless in their spirits till they have done; but they go to it as to execution; they stay from it as long as they can, and they drive, like Pharaoh's chariots, with the wheels off, sadly and heavily; and, besides that, such persons have reserved to themselves the best part of the sacrifice, and do not give their will to God; they do not love him with all their heart; they are also soonest tempted to retire and fall off. Sextius Romanus resigned the honours and offices of the city, and betook himself to the severity of a philosophical life; but when his unusual diet and hard labour began to pinch his flesh, and he felt his propositions smart, and that which was fine in discourse at a symposaic or an academical dinner,

[1] —— Jam monte potitus
Ridet——

began to sit uneasily on him in the practice, he so despaired that he had like to have cast himself into the sea to appease the labours of his religion; because he never had gone further than to think it a fine thing to be a wise man: he would commend it, but he was loath to pay for it at the price that God and the philosopher set on it. But he that is 'grown in grace,' and hath made religion habitual to his spirit, is not at ease but when he is doing the works of the new man: he rests in religion, and comforts his sorrows with thinking of his prayers; and in all crosses of the world he is patient, because his joy is at hand to refresh him when he list, for he cares not so he may serve God; and if you make him poor here, he is rich there; and he counts that to be his proper service, his work, his recreation, and reward.

3. But because in the course of holy living, although the duty be regular and constant, yet the sensible relishes and the flowerings of affection, the zeal and the visible expressions, do not always make the same emission; but sometimes by design, sometimes by order, and sometimes by affection, we are more busy, more entire, and more intent on the actions of religion—in such cases we are to judge of our growth in grace: if, after every interval of extraordinary piety, the next return be more devout and more affectionate—the labour be more cheerful and more active—and if religion returns oftener, and stays longer in the same expressions, and leaves more satisfaction on the spirit. Are your communions more frequent; and, when they are, do you approach nearer to God? Have you made firmer resolutions, and entertained more hearty purposes of amendment? Do you love God

more dutifully, and your neighbour with a greater charity? Do you not so easily return to the world as formerly? Are not you glad when the thing is done? Do you go to your secular accounts with a more warmed affection than before? If you communicate well, it is certain that you will still do it better; if you do not communicate well, every opportunity of doing it is but a new trouble, easily excused, readily omitted; done because it is necessary, but not because we love it; and we shall find that such persons, in their old age, do it worst of all. And it was observed by a Spanish confessor, who was also a famous preacher, that in persons not very religious, the confessions which they made on their death-bed were the coldest, the most imperfect, and with less contrition than all that he had observed them to make in many years before. For so the canes of Egypt, when they newly arise from their bed of mud and slime of Nilus, start up into an equal and continual length, and are interrupted but with few knots, and are strong and beauteous, with great distances and intervals; but when they are grown to their full length, they lessen into the point of a pyramid, and multiply their knots and joints, interrupting the fineness and smoothness of its body; so are the steps and declensions of him that does not grow in grace. At first, when he springs up from his impurity by the waters of baptism and repentance, he grows straight and strong, and suffers but few interruptions of piety; and his constant courses of religion are but rarely intermitted, till they ascend up to a full age, or towards the ends of their life; then they are weak, and their devotions often intermitted, and their breaches are frequent, and they seek excuses, and

labour for dispensations, and love God and religion less and less; till their old age, instead of a crown of their virtue and perseverance, ends in levity and unprofitable courses: light and useless as the tufted feathers on the cane, every wind can play with it and abuse it, but no man can make it useful. When, therefore, our piety interrupts its greater and more solemn expressions, and, on the return of the greater offices and bigger solemnities, we find them to come on our spirits like the wave of a tide, which retired only because it was natural so to do, and yet came further on the strand at the next rolling; when every new confession, every succeeding communion, every time of separation for more solemn and intense prayer is better spent, and more affectionate, leaving a greater relish on the spirit, and possessing greater portions of our affections, our reason, and our choice; then we may give God thanks, who hath given us more grace to use that grace, and a blessing to endeavour our duty, and a blessing on our endeavour.

4. To discern our growth in grace, we must inquire concerning our passions, whether they be mortified and quiet, complying with our ends of virtue, and under command; for since the passions are the matter of virtue and vice respectively, he that hath brought into his power all the strengths of the enemy, and the forts from whence he did infest him, he only hath secured his holy walking with God. But because this thing is never perfectly done, and yet must always be doing, grace grows according as we have finished our portions of this work. And in this we must not only inquire concerning our passions, whether they be sinful and habitually prevalent, for if they be, we are not

in the state of grace; but whether they return on us in violences and indecencies, in transportation, and unreasonable and imprudent expressions; for although a good man may be incident to a violent passion, and that without sin, yet a perfect man is not; a well-grown Christian hath seldom such sufferings. To suffer such things sometimes may stand with the being of virtue, but not with its security; for if passions range up and down, and transport us frequently and violently, we may keep in our forts and in our dwellings; but our enemy is master of the field, and our virtues are restrained, and apt to be starved, and will not hold out long. A good man may be spotted with a violence, but a wise man will not; and he that does not add wisdom to his virtue, the knowledge of Jesus Christ to his virtuous habits, will be a good man but till a storm come. But, beyond this, inquire after the state of your passions in actions of religion. Some men fast to mortify their lust, and their fasting makes them peevish; some reprove a vice, but they do it with much impatience; some charitably give excellent counsel, but they do that also with a pompous and proud spirit; and passion, being driven from open hostilities, is forced to march along in the retinue and troops of virtue. And although this be rather a deception and a cozenage than an imperfection, and supposes a state of sin rather than an imperfect grace; yet, because it tacitly and secretly creeps along among the circumstances of pious actions,—as it spoils a virtue in some, so it lessens it in others, and therefore is considerable also in this question.

And although no man must take accounts of his being in or out of the state of grace, by his being

dispassionate, and free from all the assaults of passion; yet, as to the securing his being in the state of grace, he must provide that he be not a slave of passion; so, to declare his growth in grace, he must be sure to take the measures of his affections, and see that they be lessened, more apt to be suppressed; not breaking out to inconvenience and imprudences; not ruffling our spirit, and drawing us from our usual and more sober tempers. Try, therefore, if your fear be turned into caution; your lust into chaste friendships; your imperious spirit into prudent government; your revenge into justice; your anger into charity; and your peevishness and rage into silence and suppression of language. Is our ambition changed into virtuous and noble thoughts? Can we emulate without envy? Is our covetousness lessened into good husbandry, and mingled with alms, that we may certainly discern the love of money to be gone? Do we leave to despise our inferiors? and can we willingly endure to admit him that excels us in any gift or grace whatsoever, and to commend it without abatement, and mingling alloys with the commendation, and disparagements to the man? If we be arrived but thus far, it is well, and we must go further. But we use to think that all disaffections of the body are removed, if they be changed into the more tolerable, although we have not an athletic health, or the strength of porters or wrestlers. For although it be felicity to be quit of all passion that may be sinful or violent, and part of the happiness of heaven shall consist in that freedom; yet our growth in grace consists in the remission and lessening of our passions: only he that is incontinent in his lust or in his anger; in

his desires of money or of honour; in his revenge or in his fear; in his joys or in his sorrows; that man is not grown at all in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. This only: in the scrutiny and consequent judgment concerning our passions, it will concern the curiosity of our care to watch against passions in the reflex act, against pride or lust; complacency and peevishness attending on virtue. For he was noted for a vain person, who, being overjoyed for the cure (as he thought) of his pride, cried out to his wife; *Cerne, Dionysia, deposui fastum;* "Behold, I have laid aside all my pride:" and of that very dream the silly man thought he had reason to boast; but considered not that it was an act of pride and levity besides. If thou hast given a noble present to thy friend; if thou hast rejected the unjust desire of thy prince; if thou hast endured thirst and hunger for religion or continence; if thou hast refused an offer like that which was made to Joseph; sit down and rest in thy good conscience, and do not please thyself in opinions and fantastic noises abroad; and do not despise him that did not do so as thou hast done, and reprove no man with an upbraiding circumstance; for it will give thee but an ill return, and a contemptible reward, if thou shalt overlay thy infant virtue, or drown it with a flood of breast-milk.

PART II.

5. He is well grown in or towards the state of grace, who is more patient of a sharp reproof than of a secret flattery. For a reprehension contains so much mortification to the pride and complacencies of a man, is so great an affront to an easy and undisturbed person, is so empty of pleasure and so full of profit, that he must needs love virtue in a great degree, who can take in that which only serves her end, and is displeasant to himself and all his gaieties. A severe reprehender of another's vice comes dressed like Jacob, when he went to cozen his brother of the blessing; his outside is 'rough and hairy,' but 'the voice is Jacob's voice:' rough hands and a healthful language get the blessing, even against the will of him that shall feel it; but he that is patient and even, not apt to excuse his fault, that is less apt to anger, or to scorn him that snatches him rudely from the flames of hell, he is virtue's confessor, and suffers these lesser stripes for that interest which will end in spiritual and eternal benedictions.

They who are furious against their monitors, are incorrigible: but it is one degree of meekness to suffer discipline; and a meek man cannot easily be an ill man, especially in the present instance. He appears, at least, to have a healthful constitution; he hath good flesh to heal; his spirit is capable of medicine: and that man can never be despaired of, who hath a disposition so near his health as to improve all physic, and whose nature is relieved from every good accident from without.

But that which I observe is, that this is not only a good disposition towards repentance and restitution, but is a sign of growth in grace, according as it becomes natural, easy, and habitual. Some men chide themselves for all their misdemeanors, because they would be represented to the censures and opinions of other men with a fair character, and such as need not to be reproved: others, out of inconsideration, sleep in their own dark rooms, and, until the charity of a guide or of a friend draws the curtain, and lets in a beam of light, dream on, until the grave opens, and hell devours them: but if they be called on by the grace of God, let down with a sheet of counsels and friendly precepts, they are presently inclined to be obedient to the heavenly monitions; but unless they be dressed with circumstances of honour and civility, with arts of entertainment and insinuation, they are rejected utterly, or received unwillingly. Therefore, although on any terms to endure a sharp reproof be a good sign of amendment, yet the growth of grace is not properly signified by every such sufferance: for when this disposition begins, amendment also begins, and goes on in proportion to the increment of this. 1. To endure a reproof without adding a new sin is the first step to amendment; that is, to endure it without scorn, or hatred, or indignation. 2. The next is to suffer reproof without excusing ourselves; for he that is apt to excuse himself, is only desirous, in a civil manner, to set the reproof aside, and to represent the charitable monitor to be too hasty in his judgment, and deceived in his information; and the fault to dwell there, not with himself. 3. Then he that proceeds in this instance, admits the reprover's sermon or

discourse without a private regret: he hath no secret murmurs or unwillingnesses to the humiliation, but is only ashamed that he should deserve it; but for the reprehension itself, that troubles him not, but he looks on it as his own medicine, and the other's charity. 4. But if to this he adds, that he voluntarily confesses his own fault, and, of his own accord, vomits out the loads of his own intemperance, and eases his spirit of the infection; then it is certain he is not only a professed and hearty enemy against sin, but a zealous, and a prudent, and an active person against all its interest; and never counts himself at ease but while he rests on the banks of Sion, or at the gates of the temple; never pleased but in virtue and religion: then he knows the state of his soul and the state of his danger; he reckons it no abjection to be abased in the face of man, so he may be gracious in the eyes of God: and that is a sign of a good grace and a holy wisdom; that man is 'grown in the grace of God, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.' *Justus in principio sermonis est accusator sui,* said the wise man: "The righteous accuseth himself in the beginning;" that is, quickly, lest he be prevented. And certain it is, he cannot be either wise or good, that had rather have a real sin within him, than that a good man should believe him to be a repenting sinner; that had rather keep his crime than lose his reputation; that is, rather to be so than to be thought so; rather be without the favour of God than of his neighbour. Diogenes once spied a young man coming out of a tavern or place of entertainment, who, perceiving himself observed by the philosopher, with some confusion stepped back again, that he might, if possible, pre-

serve his fame with that severe person. But Diogenes told him, "The more you go back, the longer you are in the place where you are ashamed to be seen." And he that conceals his sin, still retains that which he counts his shame and his burden. Hippocrates was noted for an ingenuous person, that he published and confessed his error concerning the sutures of the head: and all ages since St. Austin have called him pious, for writing his book of retractations, in which he published his former ignorances and mistakes, and so set his shame off to the world invested with a garment of modesty, and above half changed before they were seen. I did the rather insist on this particular, because it is a consideration of huge concernment, and yet much neglected in all its instances and degrees. We neither confess our shame nor endure it; we are privately troubled, and publicly excuse it; we turn charity into bitterness, and our reproof into contumacy and scorn: and who is there amongst us that can endure a personal charge, or is not to be taught his personal duty by general discoursings, by parable and apologue, by acts of insinuation and wary distances? But by this state of persons we know the estate of our own spirits.

When God sent his prophets to the people, and 'they stoned them with stones, and sawed them asunder, and cast them into dungeons, and made them beggars,' the people fell into the condition of Babylon, *Quam curavimus, et non est sanata*: "We healed her," said the prophets, "but she would not be cured:" *Derelinquamus eam*, "Let her alone," that is her doom; let her enjoy her sins, and all the fruits of sin laid up in treasures of wrath against the day of vengeance and retribution.

6. He that is grown in grace and the knowledge of Christ, esteems no sin to be little or contemptible, none fit to be cherished or indulged. For it is not only inconsistent with the love of God, to entertain any indecency or beginning of a crime, any thing that displeases him; but he always remembers how much it cost him to arrive at the state of good things, whither the grace of God hath already brought him: he thinks of his prayers and tears, his restless nights and his daily fears, his late escape and his present danger, the ruins of his former state, and the difficulty and imperfect reparations of this new, his proclivity and aptness to vice, and natural averseness and uneasy inclinations to the strictness of holy living; and when these are considered truly, they naturally make a man unwilling to entertain any beginnings of a state of life contrary to that, which, with so much danger and difficulty, through so many objections and enemies, he hath attained. And the truth is, when a man hath escaped the dangers of his first state of sin, he cannot but be extremely unwilling to return again thither, in which he can never hope for heaven. And so it must be; for a man must not flatter himself in a small crime, and say, as Lot did, when he begged a reprieve for Zoar, 'Alas! Lord, is it not a little one, and my soul shall live?' And it is not, therefore, to be entertained because it is little; for it is the more without excuse, if it be little: the temptations to it are not great, the allurements not mighty, the promises not ensnaring, the resistance easy; and a wise man considers it is a greater danger to be overcome by a little sin, than by a great one: a greater danger, I say; not directly, but accidentally; not in respect of the crime, but in relation to

the person. For he that cannot overcome a small crime, is in the state of infirmity so great, that he perishes infallibly, when he is arrested by the sins of a stronger temptation: but he that easily can, and yet will not, he is in love with sin, and courts his danger, that he may at least kiss the apples of paradise, or feast himself with the parings, since he is, by some displeasing instrument, affrighted from glutting himself with the forbidden fruit in ruder and bigger instances. But the well-grown Christian is curious of his newly-trimmed soul; and like a nice person with clean clothes, is careful that no spot or stain sully the virgin whiteness of his robe; whereas another, whose albs of baptism[1] are sullied in many places with the smoke and filth of Sodom and uncleanness, cares not in what paths he treads; and a shower of dirt changes not his state, who already lies wallowing in the puddles of impurity. It makes men negligent and easy, when they have an opinion, or certain knowledge, that they are persons extraordinary in nothing, that a little care will not mend them, that another sin cannot make them much worse: but it is a sign of a tender conscience and a reformed spirit, when it is sensible of every alteration, when an idle word is troublesome, when a wandering thought puts the whole spirit on its guard, when too free a merriment is wiped off with a sigh, and a sad thought, and a severe recollection, and a holy prayer. Polycletus was wont to say, "that they had work enough to do, who were to make a curious picture of clay

[1] Albs—garments of white linen—surplices. In the primitive church, after a person was baptized he had a white garment put upon him, to denote his being washed from the defilement of his sins.—Ed.

and dirt, when they were to take accounts for the handling of mud and mortar." A man's spirit is naturally careless of baser and uncostly materials: but if a man be to work in gold, then he will save the filings of his dust, and suffer not a grain to perish: and when a man hath laid his foundations in precious stones, he will not build vile matter, stubble, and dirt on it. So it is in the spirit of a man; if he have built on the rock, Christ Jesus, and is grown up to a good stature in Christ, he will not easily dishonour his building, or lose his labours, by an incurious entertainment of vanities and little instances of sin; which as they can never satisfy any lust or appetite to sin, so they are like a fly in a box of ointment, or like little follies to a wise man; they are extremely full of dishonour and disparagement, they disarray a man's soul of his virtue, and dishonour him for cockle-shells and baubles, and tempt to a greater folly; which every man, who is grown in the knowledge of Christ therefore carefully avoids, because he fears a relapse with a fear as great as his hopes of heaven are; and knows that the entertainment of small sins does but entice a man's resolutions to disband; they unravel and untwist his holy purposes, and begin in infirmities, and proceed in folly, and end in death.

7. He that is grown in grace, pursues virtue for its own interest, purely and simply, without the mixture and alloy of collateral designs and equally-inclining purposes. God, in the beginning of our returns to him, entertains us with promises and threatenings, the apprehensions of temporal advantages, with fear and shame, and with reverence of friends and secular respects, with reputation and coercion of human laws; and at first men snatch at the lesser and

lower ends of virtue; and such rewards as are visible, and which God sometimes gives in hand, to entertain our weak and imperfect desires. The young philosophers were very forward to get the precepts of their sect, and the rules of severity, that they might discourse with kings, not that they might reform their own manners; and some men study to get the ears and tongues of the people, rather than to gain their souls to God; and they obey good laws for fear of punishment, or to preserve their own peace; and some are worse, they do good deeds out of spite, and 'preach Christ out of envy,' or to lessen the authority and fame of others. Some of these lessen the excellency of the act, others spoil it quite: it is in some imperfect, in others criminal; in some it is consistent with a beginning infant grace, in others it is an argument of the state of sin and death; but in all cases, the well-grown Christian, he that improves or goes forward in his way to heaven, brings virtue forth, not into discourses and panegyrics, but into his life and manners. His virtue, although it serves many good ends accidentally, yet, by his intention, it only suppresses his inordinate passions, makes him temperate and chaste, casts out his devils of drunkenness and lust, pride and rage, malice and revenge; it makes him useful to his brother and a servant of God. And although these flowers cannot choose but please his eye and delight his smell, yet he chooses to gather honey, and licks up the dew of heaven, and feasts his spirit on the manna, and dwells not in the collateral usages and accidental sweetnesses, which dwell at the gates of other senses; but, like a bee, loads his thighs with wax and his bag with honey, that is, with the use-

ful parts of virtue, in order to holiness and felicity. Of which the best signs and notices we can take, will be—if we as earnestly pursue virtues which are acted in private, as those whose scene lies in public; if we pray in private, under the only eye of God and his ministering angels, as in churches; if we give our alms in secret rather than in public; if we take more pleasure in the just satisfaction of our consciences, than securing our reputation; if we rather pursue innocence than seek an excuse; if we desire to please God, though we lose our fame with men; if we be just to the poorest servant as to the greatest prince; if we choose to be among the jewels of God, though we be the περικαθάρματα, "the off-scouring" of the world; if, when we are secure from witnesses and accusers, and not obnoxious to the notices of the law, we think ourselves obliged by conscience and practice, and live accordingly; then our services and intentions in virtue are right; then we are past the twilights of conversion, and the umbrages of the world, and walk in the light of God, of his word, and of his Spirit, of grace and reason, as becometh not babes, but men in Christ Jesus.

In this progress of grace I have not yet expressed, that perfect persons should serve God out of mere love of God and the divine excellences, without the considerations of either heaven or hell; such a thing as that is talked of in mystical theology. And I doubt not but many good persons come to that growth of charity, that the goodness and excellency of God are more incumbent and actually pressing on their spirit than any considerations of reward. But then I shall add this, that when persons come to that height of grace, or contemplation rather, and they love God for

himself, and do their duties in order to the fruition of him and his pleasure; all that is but heaven in another sense, and under another name; just as the mystical theology is the highest duty, and the choicest part of obedience under a new method. But in order to the present, that which I call a signification of our growth in grace is, a pursuance of virtue on such reasons as are propounded to us as motives in Christianity; (such as are to glorify God, and to enjoy his promises in the way and in our country, to avoid the displeasure of God, and to be united to his glories;) and then to exercise virtue in such parts and to such purposes as are useful to good life, and profitable to our neighbours; not to such only where they serve reputation or secular ends. For though the great Physician of our souls hath mingled profits and pleasures with virtue, to make its chalice sweet and apt to be drunk off; yet he that takes out the sweet ingredient, and feasts his palate with the less wholesome part, because it is delicious, serves a low end of sense or interest, but serves not God at all, and as little does benefit to his soul. Such a person holds a taper that may light others to heaven, while he burns his own fingers: but a well grown person, out of habit and choice, out of love and virtue and just intention, goes on his journey in straight ways to heaven, even when the bridle and coercion of laws, or the spurs of interest or reputation, are laid aside; and desires witnesses of his actions, not that he may advance his fame, but for reverence and fear, and to make it still more necessary to do holy things.

8. Some men there are in the beginning of their holy walking with God, and while they are babes

in Christ, who are presently busied in delights of prayers, and rejoice in public communion, and count all solemn assemblies festival; but as they are pleased with them, so they can easily be without them. It is a sign of a common and vulgar love, only to be pleased with the company of a friend, and to be as well without him: *Amoris at morsum qui vere. e.ise.it*, "he that has felt the sting of a sharp and very dear affection," is impatient in the absence of his beloved object: the soul that is sick and swallowed up with holy fire, loves nothing else; all pleasures else seem unsavory; company is troublesome, visitors are tedious, homilies of comfort are flat and useless. The pleasures of virtue to a good and perfect man, are not like a perfume, which is very delightful when the box is newly broken, but the want of it is no trouble, we are well enough without it: but virtue is like hunger and thirst, it must be satisfied or we die. And when we feel great longings after religion, and faintings for want of holy nutriment, when a famine of the word and sacraments is more intolerable, and we think ourselves really most miserable when the church-doors are shut against us, or like the Christians, in the persecution of the Vandals, who thought it worse than death that their bishops were taken from them: if we understand excommunication or church censures, (abating the disreputation and secular appendages,) in the sense of the Spirit, to be a misery next to hell itself; then we have made a good progress in the charity and grace of God: till then we are but pretenders, or infants, or imperfect, in the same degree in which our affections are cold and our desires re-

miss. For a constant and prudent zeal is the best testimony of our masculine and vigorous heats, and an hour of fervour is more pleasing to God than a month of luke-warmness and indifference.

9. But as some are active only in the presence of a good object, but remiss and careless for the want of it; so, on the other side, an infant grace is safe in the absence of a temptation, but falls easily when it is in presence. He, therefore, that would understand if he be grown in grace, may consider if his safety consists only in peace, or in the strength of the Spirit. It is good that we will not seek out opportunities to sin; but are not we too apprehensive of it, when it is presented? or do we not sink under it when it presses us? Can we hold our tapers near the flame, and not suck it in greedily, like naphtha or prepared nitre? or can we, like the children of the captivity, walk in the midst of flames, and not be scorched or consumed? Many men will not, like Judah, go into highways, and untie the girdles of harlots; but can you reject the importunity of a beauteous and an imperious lady, as Joseph did? We had need pray that we be 'not led into temptation:' that is, not only into the possession, but not into the allurements and neighbourhood of it, lest by little and little our strongest resolutions be untwisted, and crack in sunder, like an easy cord severed into single threads; but if we, by the necessity of our lives and manner of living, dwell where a temptation will assault us, then to resist is the sign of a great grace; but such a sign, that without it the grace turns to wantonness, and the man into a beast, and an angel into a devil. Rabbi Moses will not allow a man to be a

true penitent, until he hath left all his sin, and in all the like circumstances refuses those temptations, under which formerly he sinned and died; and indeed it may happen, that such a trial only can secure our judgment concerning ourselves. And although to be tried in all the same accidents be not safe, nor always contingent, and in such cases it is sufficient to resist all the temptations we have, and avoid the rest, and decree against all; yet if it please God we are tempted, as David was by his eyes, or the martyrs by tortures, or Joseph by his wanton mistress, then to stand sure, and to ride on the temptation like a ship on a wave, or to stand like a rock in an impetuous storm, that is, the sign of a great grace, and of a well-grown Christian.

10. No man is grown in grace but he that is ready for every work, that chooses not his employment, that refuses no imposition from God or his superior. A ready hand, an obedient heart, and a willing cheerful soul, in all the work of God, and in every office of religion, is a great index of a good proficient in the ways of godliness. The heart of a man is like a wounded hand or arm, which, if it be so cured that it can only move one way, and cannot turn to all postures and natural uses, it is but imperfect, and still half in health and half wounded: so is our spirit; if it be apt for prayer and close-fisted in alms, if it be sound in faith and dead in charity, if it be religious to God and unjust to our neighbour, there wants some integral part, or there is a lameness; and 'the deficiency in any one duty implies the guilt of all,' said St. James; and, *Bonum ex integra causa, malum ex qualibet particulari,* "every fault spoils a grace, but one grace alone cannot make a good man."

But as to be universal in our obedience is necessary to the being in the state of grace, so, readily to change employment from the better to the worse, from the honourable to the poor, from useful to seemingly unprofitable, is a good character of a well-grown Christian, if he takes the worst part with indifference, and a spirit equally choosing all the events of the divine providence. Can you be content to descend from the ruling of a province to the keeping of a herd, from the work of an apostle to be confined in a prison, from disputing before princes to a conversation with shepherds? Can you be willing to all that God is willing, and suffer all that he chooses, as willingly as if you had chosen your own fortune? In the same degree in which you can conform to God, in the same you have approached towards that perfection, whither we must, by degrees, arrive, in our journey towards heaven.

This is not to be expected of beginners; for they must be enticed with apt employments; and it may be, their office and work so fits their spirits, that it makes them first in love with it, and then with God for giving it. And many a man goes to heaven in the days of peace, whose faith, and hope, and patience would have been dashed in pieces, if he had fallen into a storm of persecution. 'Oppression will make a wise man mad,' saith Solomon: there are some usages that will put a sober person out of all patience, such which are besides the customs of this life, and contrary to all his hopes, and unworthy of a person of his quality. And when Nero durst not die, yet when his servants told him that the senators had condemned him to be put to death, *more majorum*, that is, by

scourging like a slave, he was forced into preternatural confidence, and fell on his own sword. But when God so changes thy estate, that thou art fallen into accidents, to which thou art no otherwise disposed but by grace and a holy spirit, and yet thou canst pass through them with quietness, and do the work of suffering as well as the works of prosperous employment,--this is an argument of a great grace and an extraordinary spirit. For many persons, in a change of fortune, perish, who, if they had still been prosperous, had gone to prison, being tempted in a persecution to perjuries, and apostacy, and unhandsome compliances, and hypocrisy, and irreligion; and many men are brought to virtue, and to God, and to felicity, by being persecuted and made unprosperous. And these are effects of a more absolute and irrespective predestination. But when the grace of God is great and prudent, and masculine, and well-grown, it is unaltered in all changes; save only that every accident that is new and violent brings him nearer to God, and makes him, with greater caution and severity, to dwell in virtue.

11. Lastly; some there are who are firm in all great and foreseen changes, and have laid up in the storehouses of the spirit,—reason and religion,—arguments and discourses enough to defend them against all violences, and stand at watch so much, that they are safe where they can consider and deliberate; but there may be something wanting yet; and in the direct line, and in the straight progress to heaven, I call that an infallible sign of a great grace, and indeed the greatest degree of a great grace, when a man is prepared against sudden invasions of the spirit, surreptitious and extemporary

assaults. Many a valiant person dares fight a battle, who yet will be timorous and surprised in a midnight alarm, or if he falls into a river. And how many discreet persons are there, who, if you offer them a sin, and give them time to consider, and tell them of it beforehand, will rather die than be perjured, or tell a deliberate lie, or break a promise; who, it may be, tell many sudden lies, and excuse themselves, and break their promises, and yet think themselves safe enough, and sleep without either affrightments or any apprehension of dishonour done to their persons or their religion! Every man is not armed for all sudden arrests of passions. Few men have cast such fetters on their lusts, and have their passions in so strict confinement, that they may not be overrun with a midnight flood or an unlooked-for inundation. He that does not start when he is smitten suddenly, is a constant person. And that is it which I intend in this instance; that he is a perfect man, and well-grown in grace, who hath so habitual a resolution, and so unhasty and wary a spirit, as that he decrees on no act before he hath considered maturely, and changed the sudden occasion into a sober couusel. David, by chance, spied Bathsheba washing herself; and, being surprised, gave his heart away before he could consider; and when it was once gone, it was hard to recover it: and sometimes a man is betrayed by a sudden opportunity, and all things fitted for his sin ready at the door; the act stands in all its dress, and will not stay for an answer; and inconsideration is the defence and guard of the sin, and makes that his conscience can the more easily swallow it: what shall the man do then? Unless he be strong by

his old strengths, by a great grace, by an habitual virtue, and a sober unmoved spirit, he falls and dies the death, and hath no new strengths but such as are to be employed for his recovery; none for his present guard, unless on the old stock, and if he be a well-grown Christian.

These are the parts, acts, and offices of our growing in grace; and yet I have sometimes called them signs: but they are signs, as eating and drinking are signs of life; they are signs so as also they are parts of life: and these are parts of our growth in grace, so that a man can grow in grace to no other purpose but to these or the like improvements.

Concerning which I have a caution or two to interpose. 1. The growth of grace is to be estimated as other moral things are, not according to the growth of things natural. Grace does not grow by observation, and a continual efflux, and a constant proportion; and a man cannot call himself to an account for the growth of every day, or week, or month; but in the greater portions of our life, in which we have had many occasions and instances to exercise and improve our virtues, we may call ourselves to account; but it is a snare to our consciences to be examined in the growth of grace in every short revolution of solemn duty, as against every communion or great festival.

2. Growth in grace is not always to be discerned, either in single instances or in single graces. Not in single instances: for every time we are to exercise a virtue, we are not in the same natural dispositions, nor do we meet with the same circumstances; and it is not always necessary that the next acts should be more earnest and intense than

the former: all single acts are to be done after the manner of men, and therefore are not always capable of increasing, and they have their times, beyond which they cannot easily swell; and therefore if it be a good act and zealous, it may proceed from a well-known grace; and yet a younger and weaker person may do some acts as great and as religious as it. But neither do single graces always afford a regular and certain judgment in this affair. For some persons, at the first, had rather die than be unchaste or perjured; and 'greater love than this no man hath, that he lay down his life' for God: he cannot easily grow in the substance of that act; and if other persons, or himself, in process of time, do it more cheerfully, or with fewer fears, it is not always a sign of a greater grace, but sometimes of greater collateral assistances, or a better habit of body, or more fortunate circumstances; for he that goes to the block trembling for Christ, and yet endures his death certainly, and endures his trembling too, and runs through all his infirmities and the bigger temptations, looks not so well many times in the eyes of men, but suffers more for God, than those confident martyrs that courted death in the primitive church; and therefore may be much dearer in the eyes of God. But that which I say in this particular is, that a smallness in one is not an argument of the imperfection of the whole estate; because God does not always give to every man occasions to exercise, and therefore not to improve, every grace; and the passive virtues of a Christian are not to be expected to grow so fast in prosperous as in suffering Christians. But in this case we are to take accounts of ourselves by the improvement of those graces which

God makes to happen often in our lives: such as are charity and temperance in young men; liberality and religion in aged persons; ingenuity and humility in scholars; justice in merchants and artificers; forgiveness of injuries in great men and persons tempted by law-suits: for since virtues grow like other moral habits, by use, diligence, and assiduity,—there where God hath appointed our work and our instances, there we must consider concerning our growth in grace; in other things we are but beginners. But it is not likely that God will try us concerning degrees hereafter, in such things of which, in this world, he was sparing to give us opportunities.

3. Be careful to observe that these rules are not all to be understood negatively, but positively and affirmatively: that is, that a man may conclude that he is grown in grace, if he observes these characters in himself, which I have here discoursed of; but he must not conclude negatively, that he is not grown in grace, if he cannot observe such signal testimonies: for sometimes God covers the graces of his servants, and hides the beauty of his tabernacle with goats' hair and the skins of beasts, that he may rather suffer them to want present comfort than the grace of humility. For it is not necessary to preserve their gaieties and their spiritual pleasures; but if their humility fails, (which may easily be under the sun-shine of conspicuous and illustrious graces,) their virtues and themselves perish in a sad declension. But sometimes men have not skill to make a judgment; and all this discourse seems too artificial to be tried by, in the hearty purposes of religion. Sometimes they let pass much of their life, even of their better days

without observance of particulars; sometimes their cases of conscience are intricate, or alloyed with unavoidable infirmities; sometimes they are so uninstructed in the more secret parts of religion, and there are so many illusions and accidental miscarriages, that if we shall conclude negatively in the present question, we may produce scruples infinite, but understand nothing more of our estate, and do much less of our duty.

4. In considering concerning our growth in grace, let us take more care to consider matters that concern justice and charity, than that concern the virtue of religion; because in this there may be much, in the other there cannot easily be any, illusion and cozenage. That is a good religion that believes, and trusts, and hopes in God, through Jesus Christ, and for his sake does all justice and all charity that he can; and our blessed Lord gives no other description of love to God, but obedience and 'keeping his commandments.' Justice and charity are like the matter, religion is the form of Christianity: but although the form be more noble and the principle of life, yet it is less discernible, less material, and less sensible; and we judge concerning the form by the matter, and by material accidents, and by actions: and so we must of our religion; that is, of our love to God, and of the efficacy of our prayers, and the usefulness of our fastings; we must make our judgments by the more material parts of our duty; that is, by sobriety, and by justice, and by charity.

I am much prevented in my intention for the perfecting of this so very material consideration: I shall therefore only tell you, that to these parts and actions of a good life, or of our growth in grace, some have added some accidental considerations.

which are rather signs than parts of it. Such are, 1. to praise all good things, and to study to imitate what we praise: 2. to be impatient that any man should excel us; not out of envy to the person, but of noble emulation to the excellency: for so Themistocles could not sleep, after the great victory at Marathon purchased by Miltiades, till he had made himself illustrious by equal services to his country: 3. the bearing of sickness patiently, and ever with improvement, and the addition of some excellent principle, and the firm pursuing it: 4. great devotion, and much delight in our prayers: 5. frequent inspirations, and often whispers, of the Spirit of God, prompting us to devotion and obedience; especially if we add to this a constant and ready obedience to all those holy invitations: 6. offering peace to them that have injured us, and the abating of the circumstances of honour or of right, when either justice or charity is concerned in it: 7. love to the brethren: 8. to behold our companions, or our inferiors, full of honour and fortune; and if we sit still at home and murmur not, or if we can rejoice both in their honour and our own quiet, that is a fair work of a good man. And now, 9. after all this, I will not trouble you with reckoning a freedom from being tempted, not only from being overcome, but from being tried: for though that be a rare felicity, and hath in it much safety; yet it hath less honour, and fewer instances of virtue, unless it proceed from a confirmed and heroical grace; which is indeed a little image of heaven and of a celestial charity, and never happens signally to any, but to old and very eminent persons. 10. But some also add an excellent habit of body and material passions, such

as are chaste and virtuous dreams; and suppose, that, as a disease abuses the fancy, and a vice does prejudice it, so may an excellent virtue of the soul smooth and calcine the body, and make it serve perfectly and without rebellious indispositions. 11. Others are in love with Mary Magdalen's tears, and fancy the hard knees of St. James, and the sore eyes of St. Peter, and the very recreations of St. John; *Proh! quam virtute præditos omnia decent!* thinking "all things become a good man," even his gestures and little incuriosities. And though this may proceed from a great love of virtue, yet because some men do thus much and no more, and this is to be attributed to the lustre of virtue, which shines a little through a man's eyelids, though he perversely winks against the light; yet (as the former of these two is too metaphysical, so is the latter too fantastical,) he that, by the foregoing material parts and proper significations of a growing grace, does not understand his own condition, must be content to work on still *super totam materiam,* without considerations of particulars; he must pray earnestly and watch diligently, and consult with prudent guides, and ask of God great measures of his Spirit, and 'hunger and thirst after righteousness:' for he that does so, shall certainly, 'be satisfied.' And if he understands not his present good condition, yet if he be not wanting in the downright endeavours of piety, and in hearty purposes, he shall then find that he is grown in grace, when he springs up in the resurrection of the just, and shall be ingrafted on a tree of paradise, which beareth fruit for ever—glory to God, rejoicing to saints and angels, and eternal felicity to his own pious, though undiscerning soul.

SERMON XII.

THE SIN AND CONSEQUENCE OF VEXING THE HOLY SPIRIT.

BY THE REV. JOHN HOWE, M.A.

[JOHN HOWE was born in 1630, and died in 1705.]

SERMON XII.

ISAIAH, LXIII. 10.

But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.

IN the foregoing part of this chapter you have a representation, as it is generally agreed, of our Lord Christ in triumph; returning as a conqueror from his victories, with garments discoloured with the blood of the slain. 'Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.' The enemies whom the Messiah is supposed to have engaged against, are represented and set forth by Edom, and the metropolis thereof, Bozrah; because they were the next enemies to the church of God, mostly confined within Palestine, upon which Idumea bordered, and who were continually vexatious and afflictive to them: by these, I say, are the spiritual enemies represented, which our Lord Jesus Christ was to

set himself against. And so I have taken notice of a certain author (though I profess not to like all his allegories) who allegorically speaks of the carnal part, under the name of Edom. "The mind or spirit ought to follow God unweariedly, without deviating or turning aside, lest he come into Edom:" alluding no doubt to the word itself, *edom* or earth, as the name of Adam comes from the same root. Against these spiritual enemies, that readily fall in with our carnal, earthly part, did our Lord Jesus Christ use his prowess, unto a glorious victory and triumph. This being represented, how ready the Redeemer was to undertake on the behalf of them, who were to be defended and saved by him; a reflection is made upon God's former dealings on the behalf of this people, and their unequal carriage and deportment towards him, in the seventh, eighth, and ninth verses—(but I cannot go distinctly over them) unto which this complaint is subjoined: 'But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit; therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.'

There are two things which present themselves to our view and consideration, from these words: namely, that the rebellions of a people professing the name of God, are very vexatious to his Spirit; and, that such vexations engage him against them as their enemy. To speak to both these together, for the sake of dispatch, I shall do only these two things:

First, Inquire concerning the evil done; that is, vexing the Spirit of God, by rebelling against him. And,

Secondly, Concerning the evil suffered; and

that is his turning against them, so as to become their enemy. Upon which the use of all will ensue.

First, As to the evil done, we are to inquire in the first place concerning the nature of it; and then, in the next place, the cause thereof.

1. Let us consider the nature of the evil done, namely, the vexing of the Spirit of God. We are not to understand it as if the blessed Spirit of God was capable of such vexation as we are in ourselves; that is, of real perturbation or passion. That, common reason will tell us, the divine nature is not capable of. But yet, notwithstanding, this doth not signify nothing; there is some great thing lies under this expression, which we may conceive of in these two particulars.

(1.) His will is really crossed; somewhat is done that is against his will. I mean his will concerning our duty, not his will concerning the event; against his preceptive will, and consequently against that good which he wills to us upon the supposition of our compliance with his just and righteous will. He really wills many things in reference to men, which he doth not will effectually to procure that they shall be done. He wills our obedience and duty; and, as this is connected with it, he wills also our felicity and happiness. The will of God in the former part, is expressed by his precepts; in the latter, by his promises, so far as they are of a general tenor. But there is a will of his in reference to the event, of which it may be truly said, 'Who hath resisted his will?'[1] When the commands of God are disobeyed, and persons by

[1] Rom. ix. 19.

their disobedience rush upon vengeance, and put themselves under the effects of divine displeasure; then is that done which is averse to the legislative will of God, as it is signified to us by his word. And this is implied in the expression in the text, of his being vexed; namely, that there is a matter or object lying before him, at which he may take offence, or resent.

(2.) It is implied also, that he doth apprehend and resent this matter; though without any commotion, or perturbation. He resents it so as not to look upon it as a matter of indifference. It does not escape his notice, as profane, atheistical spirits are apt to fancy; who say, 'The Lord shall not see, neither will the God of Jacob regard it.'[1] No, there is no such thing to be imagined. God takes notice of the matter, and resents the wrong done to him; yet so calm is the resentment, as every way agrees with the felicity of the divine nature. It is this which he lays up in store, as it is emphatically expressed by Moses, and seals up among his treasures.[2] This he keeps by him as the just matter of a controversy, which he will manage; and will animadvert upon it in his own time, and when a fit and proper season shall come. So much then are we to conceive as spoken of God, or of the Spirit of God, under the expression of its being vexed.

2. We are now to inquire concerning the cause of this vexation; or show what it is that thus vexes the Spirit of God. We may well understand in the general that sin does so; being in its own nature a direct contrariety to his good, and holy, and acceptable will. But especially rebellion

[1] Psalm xciv. 7. [2] Deut. xxxii. 34.

against the Spirit of God is vexatious, which is a higher pitch of sin, and implies a continued course of disobedience. Rebellion speaks a prevalent and continued malignity of sin. 'They rebelled, and vexed his Spirit.'

But to be more particular here; we may understand what sin is more especially vexing to the Spirit of God, if we allow ourselves to consider what the titles and attributes of this Spirit in Scripture are. By these we shall know what is the tendency of the office and operations of the blessed Spirit of God; and so more easily conceive what tends to vex and to grieve it, as you know the expression is elsewhere. 'Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.'[1]

(1.) The Spirit of God is styled the Spirit of truth.[2] It is therefore very grievous and vexing to this Spirit, to have a light esteem of divine truth; to be indifferently affected towards it; to have a loose adherence to it; an easiness to part with it; and much more a proneness to oppose it, and run away from it. This, I say, must needs be vexing to the Spirit of God. And because I foresee I shall be able to speak but little to the use, I desire you as we go along to make reflections on each head; and to consider how far you may suppose yourselves guilty, and how far this age (professing the truth of God) is guilty of vexing the Spirit in this and other respects. Again,

(2.) It is mentioned in Scripture under the name of the Spirit of grace.[3] It is therefore very vexing to this blessed Spirit when that grace, of which it

[1] Eph. iv. 30. [2] John, xiv. 17. [3] Heb. x. 29.

is the author, and which it is its office and business to convey and apply, or effectually to reveal, is rejected; when in that gospel under which we live, and which is the ministration of the Spirit, grace is offered and despised; when there are few that express any regard to, or any desire or value of, the Spirit of God; this is a most vexing thing to this Spirit.

(3.) It is called the Spirit of faith.[1] Infidelity therefore must needs be reckoned a most vexing thing to this Spirit. When persons continue under the gospel in obstinate unbelief; and the great things there revealed and discovered to us, are but as a tale that is told; or regarded no more than we would regard the word of a child; a most vexing thing to the Spirit of God this must be understood to be. Moreover,

(4.) It is a spirit of contrition and repentance. This is an effect that is attributed to this Spirit as the author of it. The Spirit of grace and supplication shall be poured forth, as it is promised in Zechariah,[2] and then it is that souls shall mourn over him whom they have pierced, and be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. An impenitent hard heart, a heart that cannot repent, is a most vexatious thing to the Spirit of God. We cannot conceive a greater vexation to him, than to find hearts hard as rocks and stones, under the dispensation of the everlasting gospel.

(5.) It is styled the Spirit of love; which is the great principle that disposes and inclines the soul towards God. He hath given us the Spirit of his

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 13. [2] Zech. xii. 10.

love,[1] that principle which influenceth, and is the life and soul of all the communion there is between the blessed God and those that belong to him; which itself therefore is called 'the communion of the Holy Ghost.'[2] A cold heart then towards God, a heart that is disaffected to him, that keeps at a distance from him, that will not be engaged in sweet communion with him through love, is a most vexing thing to his Spirit. Again,

(6.) It is called a Spirit of power and of life. It is the Spirit that quickeneth,[3] says our Lord. And again St. Paul tells us, God hath given to us the Spirit of power.[4] It is a very vexatious thing to this Spirit, when any indulge themselves in deadness of heart; when they allow themselves to be formal, lukewarm, and indifferent; neither cold nor hot, as it was said of the Laodicean church,[5] whom our Lord threatens therefore to spue out of his mouth; a strong expression of his being vexed, and of his resenting the matter with very high displeasure.

(7.) It is styled the Spirit of holiness.[6] And here in our text it is said, 'They rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit.' This is a most vexing thing, when persons professing the Christian name indulge themselves in a liberty to walk at random; are impatient of restraints; affect libertinism; have not refrained their feet, but have loved to wander; therefore the Lord doth not except them; he will now remember their iniquity, and visit their sins.[7] When no bonds can be endured; when the yoke

[1] 2 Tim. i. 7. [2] 2 Cor. xiii. 14.
[3] John, vi. 63. [4] 2 Tim. i. 7.
[5] Rev. iii. 15, 16. [6] Rom. i. 4.
[7] Jer. xiv. 10.

and burden of our Lord Jesus Christ are apprehended uneasy, grievous, and intolerable; and the resolution is come to this, 'Let us cast away his cords, let us throw off his bonds from us, he shall not reign over us;' when the law of sin and death contesteth to that height against the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, as to engage us to comply with the lustings of the flesh: this is a most vexatious thing to the Spirit of our purity and holiness.

(8.) It is a heavenly Spirit, and the design of all its gracious operations upon souls is to fit them for heaven. 'He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing, is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.'[1] And again says the apostle, 'We have received, not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given us of God;' even those things which 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.'[2] A worldly heart therefore is a vexation to this Spirit; that is, when we mingle with, and suffer ourselves to be swallowed up of the spirit of this world; the inclinations and tendencies of which spirit are earthly, and running downwards; while the Spirit of God is aiming to lift us up towards God and heaven. Again,

(9.) It is a Spirit of prayer. So it is called in Scripture, the Spirit of supplication.[3] It is the great business of this Spirit to actuate souls, and to raise them to God, in the way of prayer. It is a very great vexation therefore to the Holy Spirit,

[1] 2 Cor. v. 5. [2] 1 Cor. ii. 9, 12. [3] Zech. xii. 10.

when persons grow to a prayerless disposition; do not care to converse with God in this duty; are slow in the business of prayer, either not minding it, or doing it as though they did it not; this, I say, is a very vexing thing. So he interprets it, and speaks of it with resentment: 'Thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; thou art weary of me, O Israel.'[1] When persons who formerly loved prayer, are now grown out of love with it; when those that have taken pleasure in being in their closets, and shut up in corners, are now grown strange to him, and care not to come nigh him in that way; this is especially to provoke and grieve the Spirit. The very bent and tendency of such a soul runs now directly counter to his proper design and business; which is to engage the souls of men with God in that great duty, wherein they may enjoy continually a fruitful and useful commerce with him. But they decline, and will not be brought to it by this means. This is also a very bitter vexation. And again,

(10.) It is a Spirit of sincerity and uprightness; and wherever it obtains, it makes men upright and sincere. Thus it is called the Spirit of a sound mind.[2] Hypocrisy, therefore, or a deceitful dealing with the blessed God in matters of religion, is a most vexatious thing to his Spirit. When there is only a show and appearance of love, and devotedness to him; and this only made a cover to a false disloyal heart; this is an abomination unto God. He loves truth in the inward parts, and his countenance beholdeth the upright; giving them pleasant, smiling, complacential looks, which are plain

[1] Isaiah, xliii. 22. [2] 2 Tim. i. 7.

indications of his approving, and being well pleased with them. So again, he cannot but frown with displeasure, where there is falsehood and deceit; where there is an unsound heart; a latent hypocrisy, as if we designed to impose upon him by a cheat and show; to deceive and mock him, who cannot be deceived, neither will be mocked.

(11.) It is a Spirit of union, peace, and meekness, among them that belong to God. It is designed to form the hearts of believers to these things; and so far as his Spirit is given, one heart and one way are also given; as we may see from Ezekiel, xi. 19, compared with other scriptures. Animosities among the people of God; heart-burnings, whether they be upon a common or a particular personal account, are the most vexing things imaginable to the Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of union, peace, and concord, and the very soul of the mystical body. It is a very vexatious thing when one member of this body goes to fight with another; and it may be, some against the common interest of the whole. And, in the last place,

(12.) It is a Spirit of sobriety and temperance, in opposition to grossly sensual lusts. It is a very vexatious thing to the Spirit of God, when among a people that profess his name, there is a general profusion, and running into vile sensual lusts. Some are sensual, not having the Spirit.[1] The connexion is very observable. Whereas God gives his Spirit, to form a people to that purity, that they may be different from the rest of the world; they allow themselves to run into the same excesses of

[1] Jude, 19.

riot. And I believe there are few of us that ever heard or read of an age, in which there were more gross instances of impurity among professors, than the present. How many instances do we hear of this kind! It must needs be very vexatious to the Holy Spirit, whose design it is to form a people unto God, to bear up his name in opposition to a commonly dissolute and debauched age.

You see then as to the evil done, what it is, and what is the cause of it; namely, sin, and more especially rebellion in those instances wherein the designs of the Spirit (as represented to us by various titles and attributes in Scripture) are most opposed. We are therefore now,

Secondly, To inquire concerning the evil suffered hereupon; or which we may expect will be inflicted on persons on this account; namely, his turning against them so as to become their enemy. Here we should speak distinctly,

I. Concerning the nature of this evil; and,

II. Concerning the issue of it, and how justly it does ensue in this case.

I. Let us consider the nature of this evil, and show what is imported in it. And here something is expressed, and something is implied in the words of my text; 'therefore he turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.' It is implied, that he shall cease doing for such a people as he hath done. If he was wont formerly to be a bountiful, liberal benefactor, he shall stop his hand. And especially it is to be expected, that we should be so dealt with in that very respect, wherein we have been vexatious. That is, have we vexed the Spirit of God? then it is natural to expect that the Spirit of God will retire. This is certainly im-

plied in his becoming an enemy to us. If he become an enemy, it is not likely he should hold that friendly commerce, which sometimes he hath done. If God become our enemy, his Spirit shall withdraw from us; shall not strive, nor wrestle with us. And then also these words express some positive evils against such persons; which I might instance in many particulars, but cannot now mention them.

II. I am to consider how justly this penal evil does ensue in this case; namely, that God should turn against those who rebel and vex his Spirit. This is to be collected from the greatness of the evil done. Consider therefore how just cause and matter of provocation this injurious dealing with the Spirit of God doth carry in it. Particularly,

1. Consider that this is very despiteful dealing, to do that which will vex his very Spirit. Sinners of this kind are expressly said to 'do despite unto the Spirit of grace.'[1] And surely to do that, which must directly contradict the very business and design of the Spirit, is a most spiteful kind of wickedness.

2. Consider that this is a wickedness wherein the most immediate kind of affront is offered unto God. He deals with men in a more distant way when he deals with them in his providence, or the outward manifestation of his will in his word. But when he comes to deal with the spirits of men, and to have his work within them, and their spirits resist and oppose him, there is then a most immediate contest between the blessed God and them. And we cannot but think this is a high provoca-

[1] Heb. x. 29.

tion unto God, and reckon upon this issue, that he must hereupon become our enemy. And,

3. It is to be considered that sinning so as more directly to vex the Spirit of God, does carry with it a withstanding of the Spirit in that which is its proper office; which is a great aggravation of the wickedness. It is one thing when I withstand a person in a thing, which he does casually and by the by; and another when I withstand him in that which is his stated business. It is, you know, reckoned a high affront among men to be resisted and withstood in an office. To oppose an ordinary, private person, is but a small matter in comparison of affronting an officer in the execution of his office. The Spirit of God, when it is about the work of diffusing gospel light and grace, is in the work of its own office. And when persons do such things as are vexatious in this respect; that is, oppose and withstand the Holy Spirit in its proper stated business, this must needs be highly provoking. It is a bold and insolent affront done to the blessed God; and therefore may well infer upon such a people that dreadful thing, that God should turn against them, and become their enemy.

Now as to the use (though these matters have been more lightly touched and considered than the matter required, for want of time) we may infer the following things:

I. We may infer hence, that among a people professing the name of God, the Spirit of God is wont to be at work; and where it is not doing any work, we cannot but suppose it to be thus vexatiously resisted and contended against. It was the testimony that Stephen bore against this people, even dying, that they constantly rebelled, and

vexed the Holy Spirit. 'Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye.'[1] Now what doth this imply? Inasmuch as it is said expressly that there was a war kept up against the Spirit of God, from age to age, and from generation to generation; it implies, that as they were from age to age a professing people, so from age to age the Spirit of God was still, more or less, striving with them; or else how could they be said always to resist? Where there is no striving, there is no resisting. We ought therefore to consider this, that ordinarily where the gospel is professed, there the Spirit of God is at work, more or less, though not always so as to prevail. It is a free Spirit; and works, as the wind blows, where it listeth, and to what degree also. But I conceive, that in all those who live under the gospel, the Spirit of God moves at some times, in one degree or another. For it is hardly to be imagined, that any should wear out a life's time under the gospel, and not, one time or other, have the injection of some good thought, some check or rebuke, as to their evil course; and some inclination, at least, to return, and alter their course. And I doubt not but there is a parity between these two cases; that is, as in matters of consolation the Spirit of God co-operates with our spirits, so he doth in matters of conviction, whether it ever becomes effectual or no. So that I reckon it most safe, and most honourable to God, when any injection of that kind is made in the conscience of any man that lives under the gospel, to ascribe it to the Spirit in its common operations.

II. We are hereupon to reflect and consider,

[1] Acts, vii. 51.

whether this may not be much our case and the case of the generality at this time, even thus like the Jews to have vexed the holy Spirit of God, which hath been for a long season dealing with us. Recount with yourselves the particulars mentioned; and think whether there has not been a great deal of vexation given the Spirit of God in those several ways. But I cannot stand now to remind you of them.

III. Let us be hereupon persuaded to hasten the taking up this controversy, (for it is a dreadful thing to have it depending,) by humbling and abasing ourselves in the dust, before the Lord; for ourselves on our own account, and on the behalf of the generality of those among whom we dwell. Surely this ought to be much the business of such a day as this, even deeply to humble ourselves before the Lord, for the vexation given to his Spirit; and that our temper, course, and spirits run so directly counter to him. We should not want matter of humiliation for many such days, if we did but seriously consider this case; though every day should be kept a fast, and as a day of humiliation on this account.

IV. Let us apply ourselves particularly and with great earnestness to supplicate the continuance of the Spirit, where it remains breathing in us; and the restoring it, where it had been in any measure restrained. O, how loud and importunate should our cries be upon this account! It is a fearful thing to lie under the guilt of continual vexation of the Spirit of God. You know there is a particular accent put upon such wickedness. You know there is such a thing as the sin against the Holy Ghost, in an eminent sense; and we had

need to take heed of every gradual approach unto it. I do not think that every sin against the Spirit of God, is that sin against the Holy Ghost; but we had need, I say, to look to ourselves as to any gradual approaches to it. For how great is the censure laid upon that sin! It is therefore a fearful thing to have our heart and way bent against the way and course, the tendencies and motions, of the Holy Ghost.

And when we consider the matter in this light, what reason have we to cry out, as we find the Psalmist does! 'Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.'[1] It is a great matter God hath against us, when he hath this to charge us with, namely, the vexing of his Spirit. It is a part of the charge against Sodom, that they vexed Lot's righteous spirit.[2] It is mentioned as a high aggravation of their wickedness, that they vexed the spirit of a righteous man. But how much more heinous a thing is it to vex the Spirit of God! 'Is it,' says the prophet Isaiah, 'a small thing to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?'[3] And the more we apprehend the heinousness of this matter, the louder should our cry be, "Take not away thy Holy Spirit from us, that Spirit which we have vexed, grieved, and done so much to quench." And to this purpose consider, before I conclude, these two things:—

1. The exigence of the case, and the necessity of having this Spirit. Alas! what will become of us when this Spirit is gone, quite gone, and breathes no more? What do we conceive of ourselves, we that carry about with us bodies of flesh,

[1] Psalm li. 11. [2] 2 Peter, ii. 8. [3] Isa. vii. 13.

animated by a living soul? What becomes of us when that Spirit retires, and is gone? Into what noisome putrid carcasses do we turn in a short time! And what a miserable carcass will that church become, out of which the Spirit of God is gone!—a body without a soul! an unmoving breathless thing! If God should leave us the gospel, and the external frame of ordinances, what will that avail us when the Spirit is gone? The matter would be with us, as with some noble stately mansion-house that is deserted of its great inhabitant. There you may come in, and walk from room to room, and find nobody, where there was once great resort, and a great deal of splendour, pomp, and joy, but now, nothing but desolation! Such a thing will that church be, out of which the Spirit of God, the great Inhabitant, is gone. You might have gone to that ordinance and the other, and have met with life; but now no such thing: there are the empty rooms inhabited by no one.

We should therefore so apprehend the exigence of the case, that our spirits may be awakened and stirred up, even with the utmost importunity, to obviate and avert, as much as in us lies, so great a calamity as this, and so great a death. The presence and influence of the Spirit would stand us in the stead of a great deal of mercy of other kinds. It was supposed, that to have ministers and teachers in the church would overbalance a great calamity, where it is said, 'Though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers.'[1] But how much external misery would it

[1] Isa. xxx. 20.

outweigh, to have this Spirit (so teaching as none does) remaining among us! So that it may well become us still to be praying, "Lord, whatever thou doest, withdraw not thy Spirit from us! Rather tear our flesh, pour out blood like water upon the ground, than cease to be pouring out thy Spirit among us!" We should make this much the design of all our prayers on such a day as this.

It may be, many are come before the Lord this day, to try to deprecate and avert that wrath which threatens us with external calamities; or that they may do something for the saving their estates, and their pleasant delectable things: but this is a low design. Rather say, "Let all these things go, if thou wilt, Lord, but let thy Spirit remain! let that breathe, and work in us still; and do with us, in all external respects, what thou wilt."

Let us labour thus, I say, to apprehend the necessity of our case. It is not necessary that we should be rich, or in quiet, or at liberty; it is not necessary we should have such and such external accommodations; but it is necessary we should have the Spirit: for they that 'have not the Spirit of Christ are none of his.'[1] And again,

2. Apprehend too (wherewith I close) the possibility of succeeding well, in our strivings and wrestlings with God, yet to obtain more of his Spirit. It is itself a Spirit of grace and supplication; and according as it is complied with in that, which is its proper business and office, so we may expect more and more plentiful effusions of it. We are therefore to look upon this as a hopeful

[1] Rom. viii. 9.

case, if we set ourselves to strive with God for his Spirit, that it shall not withdraw. But if it be an indifferent matter with us, then are we lost before we are aware. We feel death creeping upon us by degrees, and we regret it not; death drawing near our vitals, but we mind it not.

This is a sad case; but if we, feeling a decay and languishment, cry with importunity to God, the case is not hopeless. He hath said, that he will give the Spirit to them that ask for it; and that he will pour out his Spirit upon us. Christ represents it as given to a child, as a boon from the Father; and that this gift is comprehensive of all good things.'[1] Nay, that the Spirit is to us as bread to a child; for we can no more live without the Spirit, than a child can without bread.

If we would therefore set ourselves a craving in good earnest, and represent our case to the Father of spirits and mercies, his bowels would work towards us; and he would not long withhold his Spirit from them, whom he sees to want it and ask for it. Therefore beg of God thus: "O Lord, behold a poor company of creatures gasping for life! thy Spirit is vital breath; we are ready to die, if thy Spirit breathe not. Pity thy own offspring, thou Father of mercies, and of all spirits!" Surely then this Spirit will return; for why should not we rest upon his promise, who has said that God will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

And we may the more boldly ask, because we may suppose ourselves to be nearer those days wherein there shall be a more general pouring out of the Spirit. And we might argue that

[1] Matt. vii. 11, compared with Luke, xi. 13.

those days are nearer indeed, if there was a more general, and importunate, and loud cry for this Spirit. This would import that a great measure of it is already come, and that far greater measures are coming. It would be an argument that it would be a Spirit of consolation and joy, life and vigour; which would make religion a glorious thing, and Christians shine and live, both at once.

SERMON XIII.

ON THE BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST.

BY ARCHBISHOP SHARP.

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SERMON XIII.

MATTHEW, XII. 31, 32.

Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man it shall be forgiven him, but whosoever speaketh a word against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come.

IT is my design at this time to give an account of this difficult text, and, in doing that, to explain the nature of that sin, which in common speech we call the sin against the Holy Ghost. I have observed how much that sin is often mistaken, and what trouble and perplexities of mind have hence arisen to well-meaning people, but especially those that are hypochondriac in their tempers. I thought, therefore, that a plain account of this might be of some service.

There are many sins against the Holy Ghost. Whosoever 'grieveth the Spirit,' or 'quencheth the Spirit;' both which things St. Paul cautions the

Christians against, sinneth against the Holy Ghost. Ananias and Sapphira, in the lie they told St. Peter, are said to lie against the Holy Ghost. St. Stephen calls the stubbornness and disobedience of the Jews to the admonitions of the prophets a resisting of the Holy Ghost, and consequently a sin against him. Simon Magus's sin, in offering to purchase the gift of the Spirit with money, was a sin against the Holy Ghost.

But none of these seem to be the sin against the Holy Ghost; the sin which, by way of eminence, we call so, and of which we are now to treat. The not observing this distinction has given occasion to many of those notions, concerning this great sin, which have too often perplexed the consciences of weak persons.

For the finding out what this sin is, we must take the Scriptures for our guide, and them only; nay, we must keep close to the very words and phrases in which it is there spoken of, having also a special regard to the occasions of those speeches.

The neglect of this is another reason why men have been so different, and some of them so unlucky, in their apprehensions and definitions of this sin; running away with this, that the sin is unpardonable, they looked not much further in the Scriptures for the nature of it, but presently concluded that that sin that was the greatest, or to them appeared so, must needs be it.

There is no text, in the Epistles of the New Testament, that doth in express words mention it. And, as for the evangelists, there are three of them indeed that speak of it, but each of them but once, and all of them upon the same occasion. From

these texts therefore we are wholly to take our measures. Of these three texts, this that I have read unto you is much the largest and fullest, and therefore I have pitched upon it, and shall now apply myself to give an account of it.

In speaking to it I shall endeavour these five things:—

1. First, To give an account of the sin here mentioned, which is expressed by two names; the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and the speaking against the Holy Ghost, which is here said shall never be forgiven.

2. Secondly, To give an account of the lesser sort of sins here mentioned, which are here put in antithesis, or by way of opposition to the former; that is, in the former verse, all manner of sin and blasphemy, and in the latter more particularly, the speaking a word against the Son of Man, which sins it is here said shall be forgiven unto men.

3. Thirdly, To show in what sense it is said of the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, 'that it shall never be forgiven in this world, nor in that which is to come.

4. Fourthly, To examine, whether from hence it may be concluded, that the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is a sin absolutely unpardonable.

5. Fifthly, To enquire whether it is possible for Christians to commit this sin, and likewise what sins do most nearly approach to it.

An account of these particulars will be sufficient, for the observing most of those difficulties that are usually raised upon this argument.

The first thing I am to do is, to give an account of the great sin here spoken of in the text, which is that we call the sin against the Holy Ghost. Now,

to the clearing of this, the terms by which the text expresseth it, will not a little contribute. We, in common speech, call it the sin against the Holy Ghost; but the text doth not style it by that general name, but by a much more particular one: such a name as instructs us, to what particular kind or rank of sins we are to reduce it, that is to say, 'blasphemy,' or speaking reproachful words against another. It is very observable, that it is nowhere called the sin against the Holy Ghost, neither in this text, nor in either of the two other gospels; but always the 'blasphemy' against the Holy Ghost, or 'speaking' against the Holy Ghost: the latter of which terms means the very same with the former; for blaspheming is nothing else but speaking against another. It is true, in our English language, we make a difference between blaspheming and speaking of another, because we appropriate blasphemy to such words, or evil speeches, as are spoken against God; but the Scripture makes no difference. To blaspheme is used, not only with respect to God, but with respect to other persons, and things also; and imports neither more nor less than slander, calumny, or evil speeches, against whatsoever and whomsoever they are spoken. Thus, in the 8th verse of the Epistle of Jude, where we in English translate 'speaking evil of dignities,' in the Greek it is, 'blaspheming dignities.' And two verses after, where our translators render 'these men speak evil of things that they know not,' in the Greek it is, 'These men blaspheme things that they know not.' And thus St. Paul commands 'that Christians should speak evil of no man,'[1] in

[1] Titus, iii 2.

the Greek it is, 'that they should blaspheme no man.' Thus, where St. Paul saith of himself, 'that he is slanderously reported of,'[1] in the Greek it is, 'that he is blasphemed.' And twenty other instances there are of this kind.

Thus much then we have undeniably got, towards the finding out the sin against the Holy Ghost: namely, that it doth consist in blasphemy, or calumny, or slanderous words. That which now remains to be found out, is what kind of blasphemy it is, which is here called the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; or, of what kind of slanderous words we are here to understand the words spoken of against him. If we can once come to a certain knowledge of this, we may be able to form a certain notion of the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Now, for this, we must have recourse to the context, and, by well perusing that, we shall not fail of what we seek for.

The occasion of these words of our Saviour in the text was this. It appears, by the 22d, 23d, and 24th verse of this chapter, that our Saviour having cast forth a devil out of a man that was both blind and dumb, and made him perfectly to see and speak, and the people being amazed at this great miracle, and concluding from hence that Jesus must necessarily be the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of David; the Pharisees, to put them into another belief, and so to hinder them from coming over to be his disciples, do maliciously give out, that though Jesus did cast out devils, yet it was not by any divine power; but merely by the power of Beelzebub the prince of the devils.

[1] Rom. iii.

What now saith our Saviour to this? Why two things. First, he endeavours to show the groundlessness of their slander, or calumny; and, secondly, to convince them of the grievousness of the sin, and the greatness of the punishment they thereby drew upon themselves, in thus scandalizing his miracles, and saying, they were done by the power of the devil.

The groundlessness of their slander he shows, by offering three reasons or arguments, which might convince any reasonable man, and especially them, that his miracles could not be wrought by the help of the devil, but by the Spirit of God.

The first was, that it was utterly against the interest of the devil's kingdom, to maintain and allow divisions among themselves, or that one devil should oppose or eject another, (as, if they said true of our Saviour, they must needs do,) for this was the ready way to bring that kingdom to desolation. This is the sum of the two next verses.

Secondly, they had no more reason to say he cast out devils by Beelzebub, than they had to say the same of several of their own people or disciples, who either did cast out devils, or pretended so to do, in the name of the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob. Now, since they cast no such imputation of magic or sorcery upon them, why should they upon him? This is the sum of the two next verses.

But, thirdly, which was a demonstrative argument, it appears plainly, both from the design of Christ's miracles, and the tendency of his doctrines, that he was so far from working them by collusion or confederacy with the devil, that, on the contrary, he was the greatest enemy the devil had.

Nay, that he was his superior, and overcame him, binding the strong man, and spoiling his house, doing all the mischief that was possible to his kingdom. This is the sum of the two verses before the text.

And thus, having by these three arguments vindicated himself from their slanders; he comes, in the second place, to testify against their sin, and to warn them of the punishment that attended it, in the words of the text: 'Wherefore, I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.' As much as to say: Since from what I have said, it appears so evidently that your charge against me is altogether groundless; and that there is no colour for your saying, that I cast out devils by the help of the devil; nay, you yourselves are convinced, that you slander my works; (for it is said a little before that Jesus knew their thoughts;) and, if you would speak your hearts, you cannot but confess, that they are true miracles, and done by the Spirit of God—I say, since this is your case, pray think what a grievous crime you are guilty of, in thus traducing and calumniating this good Spirit of God, and calling him a devil. All other sins and blasphemies shall be given unto men, but this blasphemy of yours is of so horrible a nature, that whoever is guilty of it shall never be forgiven, but is in danger of eternal damnation, as St. Mark expresseth it.

Thus do the words of the text plainly lie, with relation to the foregoing words; and, whoever will not violently rend one part of our Saviour's discourse from another, must of necessity put this construction upon them. So that there will be no

need of many words to persuade you that the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and the speaking against him here mentioned, was spoken wholly with relation to the Pharisees; and that this blasphemy, this speaking against the Spirit, was neither more nor less than their asserting that our Saviour cast out devils and wrought his other miracles by Beelzebub; or thus, their asserting that the Spirit by which he did these works was an impure spirit; than which there cannot be a greater blasphemy of the Holy Ghost, or worse words spoken against him.

That this is the true, and only account of the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, if what I have said do not persuade us, let St. Mark's express affirmation do it. He, in the parallel text, in the 3rd of his gospel, verses 28, 29, having set down this passage of our Saviour, 'that all other sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven unto men; but he that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation;' in the very next verse adds, as the reason why our Saviour had so said, 'because,' saith he, 'the Pharisees said he had an unclean spirit.'

If any one ask, why should not this calumny of the Pharisees be rather accounted and styled a blasphemy against our Saviour, than against the Holy Ghost, the answer is easy to any one that understands the Scripture language, for there all miracles and extraordinary works, whether performed by the prophets, or by our Saviour, or by his apostles, are constantly attributed to the Holy Spirit, and accounted the effects of his power and operation; and therefore to say, that our Saviour's miracles were done by the devil, was most properly an

affront put upon the Holy Ghost, by whom he wrought them.

I know not what further to add, towards the clearing of this point, unless it be to take notice of that passage of our Saviour which follows three or four verses after my text, where he is still upon the same subject. 'I say unto you,' saith he, 'that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof at the day of judgment.' What is here meant by an idle word? Is every light and foolish and unprofitable speech, in conversation, that doth not tend to edification, an idle word? God forbid. For who is there then that shall not be called to account? No, the idle words here are false and scandalous words. Just as to swear vainly and idly is the Scripture term to express swearing falsely. And the tongue that speaketh vanity or idleness, is the tongue that speaketh lies: and several other instances there are, in Scripture, where the word is used in the same sense.

This then seems to be our Saviour's sense; "Verily, I say unto you, that for every slander or calumny that ye vent against any man, ye shall be called to a severe account; and, therefore, much more may ye expect to be so, when ye calumniate and slander the Holy Ghost, by ascribing his works to Beelzebub."

But I proceed to the second thing I am to give an account of in this text, and that is, what is meant by those other lesser sins, that are here set in opposition to the sin against the Holy Ghost: and which it is said shall be forgiven unto men, whereas the sin against the Holy Ghost shall not. There are, in the first class, in the text expressed generally, all manner of sin and blasphemy; and

in the latter class, more particularly the speaking a word against the Son of Man: these it is said shall be forgiven unto men.

As for the first expression, 'all manner of sin and blasphemy,' I must confess I like their account best, who expound it not of all kind of sins indiscriminately, but of sins of one particular sort; namely, such sins as he was here reproving, that is to say, sins that were committed against others. So that in this sense the sins here mentioned will be much the same thing with the blasphemies, and 'all manner of sin and blasphemy' will be no more than all manner of affronts and slanders. This interpretation seems best to suit with the scope of the place, for our Saviour here is not discoursing of any sins but slander and blasphemy. And his business is to show, how much the slander and blasphemy of the Holy Ghost doth exceed all other slanders. And it is observable, that in the parallel text of St. Luke, there is no mention of sins, but only of blasphemy.

And then, as for the lesser class in the text, 'the speaking a word against the Son of Man,' without doubt, by the Son of Man we are to understand our Lord Jesus Christ; and to speak a word against him, will be to talk slightingly and reproachfully of him; as calling him a glutton or a wine-bibber, as he himself tells us several of the Jews did. So that these words are a new proposition, and express a further sense than the former verse did; that is, to this effect:—I say unto you, that all manner of slanders and blasphemy, wherewith men slander others, shall be forgiven them, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven them. Nay, I say further to you, who-

ever slanders or speaks evil of me, who am more than an ordinary person, a prophet sent from God, disparaging either my person or my preaching, yet even this shall be forgiven him. But whoever speaks against the miracles that I do, and saith they are done by the power of the devil; this is so horrid a blasphemy that it shall never be forgiven him either in this world or in the other.

If any one ask, upon what account it is that the speaking against the miracles of our Saviour, is of so heinous and damning a nature above all other blasphemies; I answer, there is great reason for it; because the miracles that our Saviour wrought were the principal evidence that he gave, or could give, of his being sent from God: and consequently, the great means for the converting the whole world to his religion. And, therefore, to speak against them, and to attribute them to the power of the devil, must needs be, as the most spiteful and malicious, so also the most mischievous blasphemy in the world; because it was the most effectual way to hinder people from believing on him, and consequently to defeat all God's gracious ends, of bringing men to salvation by the gospel: than which the devil himself cannot do a worse thing.

I pass on to the third difficulty in this text, which is the importance of that phrase, 'neither in this world nor in the world to come.' Our Saviour is not content to say, in the former verse, that the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven; but he adds in the latter verse, 'that it shall never be forgiven in this world, nor in the world to come.' Which expression some of the church of Rome would suborn, for the proving their doctrine of purgatory; they would conclude

from hence, that a man may in the other world make satisfaction for his sins, so that they shall then be forgiven him, though they were not forgiven in this life, but this is without any ground at all. All that our Saviour designs to express is this, that this sin of the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost shall be grievously punished, both in this world and in the other: and the phrase, by which he expresseth it, was very well known and familiar to those he spoke to; it was a common and received doctrine among the Jews, that, for some sins, a man was pardoned presently upon his repentance; that other sins were not pardoned till the solemn day of expiation, which came once a year: that other sins, which were yet greater, were not to be expiated but by some grievous temporal affliction. But all sins (those that could not be pardoned these ways) were yet expiated by death, supposing the man was an Israelite; the life of an Israelite was a sufficient atonement for his sin, and no Israelite, but such a one as renounced his faith could be punished in the other world. To this opinion of theirs (which is very common in their books) our Saviour, in this expression, seems to have respect; as if he had said: Flatter not yourselves with a conceit, that you Israelites shall have all your sins purged either in this life by your sufferings, or at the furthest by your death. No, I assure you, this blasphemy and open affront that you put upon the Spirit of God, is a crime of so high a nature, that it shall not be expiated either in this life or at your death; but those that are guilty of it shall have a miserable portion, both in this world and that which is to come. This seems to be the full import of this expression.

But there is a greater difficulty behind, which is that I am to speak to in the fourth place; and that is, whether, from what is here said concerning the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, it may be concluded that that sin is absolutely unpardonable, to all persons that are guilty of it.

I must confess this is an inquiry more curious than necessary, since which way soever it be determined, it will not much concern any of us, who cannot be supposed to have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost, or to be ordinarily capable of so doing: however, for the giving further satisfaction to timorous and hypocondriac persons, it will not be amiss, if we say something to this point: leaving it, in the mean time, to every person to receive or reject, as in his discretion he shall see cause.

It is the opinion of several most eminent and learned divines, that our Saviour's words here are not to be taken in an absolute, but in a comparative sense; that is to say, that when he says, 'all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men;' his meaning is no more, than that all other sins and blasphemies shall sooner be forgiven, than this blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. For, say they, if his words be to be taken in an absolute sense, without this comparison, then the first part of his proposition is not true: for it is certain, that all other sins and blasphemies shall not actually be forgiven to all men; but some shall perish in their sins and blasphemies. They say therefore, that our Saviour makes use of an Hebrew form of speech, which is very frequently to be met with in the Scriptures, when the difficulty of a thing coming to pass is de-

signed to be expressed by the Jewish authors. Thus they will say, such a thing shall come to pass, but another thing shall not come to pass; where it is not their design, to affirm of the former thing, that it shall really come to pass, but only to express the much greater difficulty there is, that the latter thing should ever come to pass. An instance we have of this way of expression, in the 5th chapter of St. Matthew, where our Saviour says, 'heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall never pass away.' Now, certainly his meaning there is not, that heaven and earth should really pass away, but that they should sooner pass away than his words should; and so indeed St. Luke expresseth it. So that, according to this interpretation of my text (which I must confess I think the true one) it appears that our Saviour doth not here speak either of the pardonableness of some sins, or the unpardonableness of others: but only, comparatively, of the much greater danger and difficulty of obtaining pardon for the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, than for any other blasphemy.

But, if we are unwilling to take the words in this comparative sense, and think they should rather be understood positively and absolutely, as they are expressed, let us take them so. So let the sense of them be, that all other calumnies and blasphemies may be forgiven unto men, but this particular sin, the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven unto men. Yet I desire it may be observed, in the first place, that it will not follow from hence that there is any sin that shall not be pardoned upon repentance. No: still this will be a true proposition, namely, that

there is no sin so great, but, if the sinner do sincerely repent, he may hope for mercy at God's hands. And if he that is guilty of the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, do not or shall not find mercy, it is purely because he doth not, or cannot, repent of it. That is to say, when a man is come to such a high degree of malice and impudence and obstinacy in sinning, that he dares affront the Holy Ghost, by ascribing his works to the devil, it is just in God to deny that person that grace which is necessary to his repentance, and so to his pardon; and to leave him irremediably in the condition he hath brought himself into. It is upon the supposition of this only, that the sin against the Holy Ghost is unpardonable. But this is the case of many other sinners, besides those that have committed this sin. Many persons may have sinned so long, and so obstinately, that God may have totally forsaken them before they die; and then it is certain of these persons, that their sins shall never be forgiven, because they shall never repent.

So that this unpardonableness of the sin against the Holy Ghost is no bar, in the least, to our exhorting and encouraging all sorts of persons to repentance, even the greatest sinners; nor any bar to their hopes of pardon, if they do repent; no more than the guilt of any other grievous sin is. We may, for all that, safely promise pardon to all true penitents for all sins whatsoever, without exception; and, in the same degree, we can persuade them to repent, in the same degree, we may hope of them. Athanasius's words do fitly come in, upon this occasion. " God did not," saith he, " say to him that blasphemes and repents, ' it shall not be forgiven,' but to him that blasphemes and remains

in his blasphemy. For there is no sin that God will not pardon to them that worthily repent."[1]

But secondly, I add this further, that this saying of our Saviour's, taking it in its rigorous sense, doth not exclude all those that sin against the Holy Ghost, from all possibility of repentance, and therefore consequently from all possibility of obtaining pardon. For there are several degrees of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. This blasphemy, in some persons, may be aggravated with more knowledge and wilfulness and malice than in others; and these others, that sin with less knowledge, and less malice, and less wilfulness, are more capable objects of God's grace and mercy and forgiveness. And, besides, it is enough for the verifying these kind of threatenings, that they shall generally and for the most part be inflicted: though not always, and in all cases, and on all persons. Those very persons that our Saviour here charged with the sin against the Holy Ghost, and that afterwards crucified him, yet those very persons our Saviour prays for, that their sin might be forgiven; and those very persons St. Peter afterwards preacheth to, and calleth upon them, to wash away their sin by baptism and repentance. This is an argument, that the case of all them was not desperate, but that some of them might repent and be forgiven. And one of the fathers doubts not to say (I think it is St. Ambrose,) that some of those three thousand that were converted by St. Peter's first sermon, were of these Pharisees that had been guilty of the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost.

[1] See Quest. ad Antioc. 72.

There is nothing more positively threatened in the New Testament, than actual damnation to the unworthy receivers of the Lord's-supper, among the Corinthians. 'He that eateth and drinketh unworthily,' saith St. Paul, 'eateth and drinketh damnation to himself.' Now, let us take damnation here in what sense we will, it will be very hard to say, that all those that did then eat or drink unworthily, or have done so at any time since, did or shall actually incur that punishment. God Almighty, like all other lawgivers, when he makes laws and annexes punishments to them, to deter from the transgression of them, doth not thereby so tie up his own hands, but that he hath still the power of granting repentance, and, upon that, pardon, as he sees cause: and, in the midst of his judgment, his mercy will find a place, if the sinner, by a monstrous degree of obstinacy, hath not made himself uncapable of it.

But enough upon this head. Having thus given an account (or at least endeavoured it) of all the difficulties in the text, that that remains is, in the fifth and last place, to enquire whether Christians at this day can be guilty of this blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and what those sins are that do most nearly approach to it.

This enquiry is the more needful, because some persons, under the power of melancholy, are apt to fancy that they are guilty of this unpardonable sin, though, as it may appear from what has been said, without any reason at all. I shall briefly comprise what I have to say, upon this head, in these following particulars :—

First of all, if we take the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost precisely as our Saviour here discours-

eth of it, it is impossible that any man now living should be guilty of it; because no man can be in those circumstances that they were, whom he here charges it upon: they were eye-witnesses of his miracles, and so had the greatest evidence that was possible of the truth of them, and yet attributed them to sorcery and witchcraft. Now none, but those that lived at that time. were capable of blaspheming in this manner. Secondly, it is impossible for one that professeth Christianity, so long as he professeth it, to be guilty of the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost here spoken of. I do not speak as to the circumstances, (for as to those I just now spoke,) but as to the kind of blasphemy: he cannot be guilty of that kind of blasphemy. For whosoever professeth Christianity, let him be never so wicked other ways, yet he pretends to believe that it is the true religion, and that Christ was a true prophet. And if he pretends or professes to believe so, he cannot at the same time give out, that Christ was an impostor, and wrought his miracles by the power of the devil, which, as I have showed, is the only blasphemy against the Holy Ghost mentioned in the Gospel.

Thirdly, if there be any man among us, that is convinced of the truth of the matter of fact concerning our Saviour's history, that believes there was such a person as Jesus, that he preached such a doctrine, led such a life, wrought such miracles, as he is recorded to have done, and yet, contrary to his own conviction, saith that this Jesus did these extraordinary works by the power of the devil, such a man hath blasphemed the Holy Ghost in the same kind, though not with the same circumstances, that the Pharisees did. Further, if any one do as-

cribe the mighty works that were done by the apostles, and the other first Christians, by virtue of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon them, which were as great and as convincing as the miracles our Saviour himself wrought; I say, if any one do ascribe those to the devil, being convinced of the truth of the matter of fact, such a one also blasphemes the Holy Ghost, in the same kind, though in different circumstances, as the Pharisees did.

Fourthly, all atheistical persons, that deny the being of God, or Providence, and scoff at all religion, and would make others believe that it is a mere cheat and imposture; though they are not guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost, because they do not believe the miracles of our Saviour, yet they have sinned as much or more against their natural light, and are guilty of as great, if not greater blasphemy, than the Pharisees were, namely, the blasphemy against God the Father: and, consequently, their sin will be as unpardonable, or more unpardonable, than theirs.

Fifthly, a total apostacy from the Christian religion, and going over to the enemies of it, is of all other sins the nearest to the sin against the Holy Ghost; and may sometimes prove the very same: and accordingly, as severe things are said against this sin by the apostles, as are said against the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost, by our Saviour.

Sixthly, there are other sins, which, though they are not of so horrid a nature as this I now mentioned, yet have in them a natural tendency towards this great unpardonable sin we are speaking of. And, therefore, every one that has any regard to his soul, ought more especially to beware of them. Such are profane drolling upon religion,

turning into ridicule the holy Scriptures, the matter of faith; and lastly, infidelity, and not believing and owning Christ's religion, notwithstanding all the evidence we have of the truth of it. These, it is true, are none of them directly blasphemies against the Holy Ghost, but they have some affinity with it; and a sad account have those persons, that are guilty of them, to make at the day of judgment, unless they prevent it by a timely repentance.

But, seventhly and lastly, it appears plainly, from the account we have now given, that those sins that do most trouble and afflict the consciences of Christians, as taking them to be the sin against the Holy Ghost, are far from being what they take them to be; nay, are of a quite different nature. The general opinion that people among us have of the sin against the Holy Ghost, is this, that it is any great wilful deliberate sin, committed against conscience, after a full conviction, when the Spirit of God in their hearts testified that they ought not to do this wickedness. All these kind of sins are indeed bad enough, and will as certainly damn us, without repentance, as the sin against the Holy Ghost. But yet it is plain, from the account I have given of that sin, that they are no ways akin to it; but of a quite different nature. For the proper notion of that sin, as I have often said, is the affirming our Saviour's miracles to be magical and diabolical; which, it is to be hoped, those that commit these deliberate sins, are far from doing. There is another notion of the sin against the Holy Ghost, that obtains among some, which is far more unlikely than this I have mentioned; but, it is to be confessed, that it is only those that are deeply afflicted with hypocondriac melancholy, that do

entertain it. It is this, that wicked, and atheistical, and blasphemous thoughts are the sin against the Holy Ghost. But I would ask such, do they encourage these thoughts or no? Do they delight in them, or do they vent them as the fixed and settled sentiments of their minds, and that too designingly and maliciously? If they do not, (as I dare say of all others, those that thus complain are least likely to do,) they may be assured that they are far from having committed the sin against the Holy Ghost: nay, perhaps (as the case may be) from having committed any sin at all. Another notion taken up, about the sin against the Holy Ghost, by some people, is, that it is a not complying with the good notions that are sometimes made to their souls, by the Spirit of God. But there is no occasion to give any further answer.

I have gone through all the points I proposed to discourse on, upon this text. I have no more to add, but that it would please God, who hath brought us to the knowledge of the truth, to the belief of his Son, and his miracles and doctrines, to establish and confirm us, every day more and more, in that knowledge and belief, that we may never fall away from him, or affront the Holy Spirit, nor ever dishonour his excellent religion, with a loose, vicious, unchristian life.

This God of his mercy grant, &c.

SERMON XIV.

ON THE NECESSITY AND COMFORT OF THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE HOLY GHOST.

BY BISHOP WILSON.

[THOMAS WILSON was born in 1663, and in 1697 was made Bishop of Sodor and Man. He died in 1755.

SERMON XIV

ROMANS, VIII. 14.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

WHEN our blessed Lord was to leave the world, he assured his disciples, that one should be sent to supply his place; to comfort them for his absence; to guide them into all truth; to bring all things to their remembrance, whatever he had taught them; to sanctify their persons, and bless their labours. By whose labours we, amongst many other nations, have been brought out of darkness and error, into the clear light and true knowledge of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ.

This, indeed, is a mighty blessing; but this is not all. This would not have answered the great love and design of God, to save his lost creatures; for such is the weakness and corruption of our nature, that though we should be convinced, even by miracles, of the truth of the gospel; though we should know the will of God never so well; yet we are not able, of ourselves, to walk in the commandments of God. And therefore it was necessary that the same Spirit, which enabled the apostles of

Christ to convert the world, should continue to guide, to assist, to defend, and sanctify all such as by their ministry should be converted, in the great work of their salvation; that is, all such as being convinced of the truth of Christianity do desire to walk worthy of that name and calling.

For it is too plain and sad a truth to be denied, that all are not Christians indeed, who yet own the truth of the gospel, and are persuaded of the necessity of obeying it, and have embraced its profession. Not that the Holy Spirit denies his graces to any that are dedicated to him in baptism; but men thrust him from them; refuse to ask assistance; grieve him by their evil deeds, and force him to forsake them, and tô leave them to themselves, and to the government of evil spirits, who walk about like roaring lions, seeking whom they may be permitted to devour, finding them forsaken of God, and prepared for destruction.

Forasmuch, therefore, as it would be no blessing for men to be convinced of the truth of the Christian religion, by considering the miraculous powers of the Holy Ghost, by which it was at first established, unless they afterwards live answerable to what that religion requires of them, (which they cannot possibly do, without the continual grace and assistance of this same Holy Spirit,) the Scriptures therefore are very express in exhorting Christians to strive and pray for the graces of the Holy Spirit, that they may live as they have believed.

And that Christians may not be mistaken, and lay too much stress upon their being made in baptism children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven, without taking great care to live like children of so holy a Father, and like people who hope

to go to heaven; the sacred Scriptures, I say, have most particularly set down the marks and characters of such Christians as may hope for benefit by their Christian profession. 'If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ,' saith St. Paul, 'he is none of his.'[1] 'If we live in the Spirit,' saith he, in another place, 'let us also walk in the Spirit;'[2] that is, if we pretend to be born again, let us live like people that are become new creatures. And in the words which I have chosen for a text, 'As many,' saith he, 'as are led by the Spirit of God, they, and they only, are the sons of God.' They only can call God Father, so as to be heard by him, so as to have their prayers answered, so as to be rewarded by him.

And that Christians may not fancy that they are led by the Spirit of God, when indeed they are not, the same apostle sets down, in plain terms, what are the fruits of the Spirit of God, or of one that is led by the Spirit of God. 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, courteousness, goodness, (or a readiness to do good,) faithfulness, meekness, temperance,'[3] (or continence.)

From this it appears, that men are not masters of themselves. Led they must be, either by the spirit and powers of darkness, or by the Spirit of God. It is for this reason that God, for Christ's sake, has given us the earnest of his Spirit, in baptism; with this assurance, that he who submits to be governed by his Spirit, and brings forth fruit worthy of such a favour, he shall still have greater favours conferred upon him; but he that is not

[1] Rom. viii. 9. [2] Gal. v. 25. [3] Gal. v. 22.

careful to improve the graces God gives him, from him shall be taken away, even what was before bestowed upon him.

Now, if men, notwithstanding this caution given them, will be making experiments how far they may neglect their duty, without losing the earnest of God's Spirit;—if they will try to govern themselves by their own reason and wisdom, laying aside the laws of God;—why then they may, indeed, take themselves from under God's oversight and direction; but servants still they must be, and led they must be, by the spirit and powers of darkness: they only change masters, (for a master they must have,) and how much for the worse, sad experience will soon show!

It is for this reason that humility, and care, and watchfulness are so much recommended in Scripture, lest Christians should grow conceited of their own wisdom and ability to govern themselves; lest they should neglect the means of grace which God has already given them; and lest, being often off their guard, the devil should at last be permitted to take them into his kingdom and service; from whence they cannot return to God when they please, no more than a dead man can return to life by his own power.

And this, by the way, is the true reason why neither advice, nor authority, neither the hopes of heaven, nor the fears of hell, can prevail with some sinners to forsake the evil ways they have taken. They are not their own masters; they are servants to one who will not suffer them to return to sober reason; they have forsaken God, and God has given them up to a reprobate mind, 'a mind void of judgment;'

so that they commit all iniquity with greediness, yea, though they see their ruin attends it.

On the other hand, 'such as are led by the Spirit of God' do experience his assistance in the whole course of their lives; enlightening their understandings, convincing their judgments, awakening their consciences, curing the perverseness of their nature, and filling their souls with all those graces and virtues which are necessary to fit men for heaven. Hence it comes to pass, that men who of themselves are not able to think one good thought, yet by God's grace and Spirit do very plainly perceive the excellency of religion and piety, the folly and unreasonableness of sin; the happiness that attends the one, and the misery that must be the reward of the other.

Hence it comes to pass, that a poor, weak creature, assisted by the Spirit of God, is able to resist the prince of darkness with all his host of evil angels. Hence it is, that man, who is naturally proud and obstinate, is yet brought to humble himeslf before God, acknowledge his own nothingness, confess his sinfulness, and that he merits nothing but misery. Hence it is, that man, who is naturally blind and ignorant in the things which most nearly concern his eternal welfare, yet enlightened by the Spirit of God, can very readily apprehend divine truths, can see the wisdom, and goodness, and love of God, in all that he has commanded or requires of us. And, to give no more instances but this one, of the power of the Spirit of God upon those with whom he dwells, and who suffer themselves to be led by him; hence it is that Christians are brought to embrace doctrines so very uneasy to flesh and bood, so very unacceptable to corrupt

reason:—'Blessed are they that mourn; blessed are the poor in spirit; blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness sake. Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that use you spitefully.'

Well, though all these truths were delivered by the Son of God himself, though they were confirmed by infinite miracles, yet if God had not sent his Holy Spirit into our hearts, we might indeed have heard these doctrines, but receive them we never could, much less have practised them. But by the assistance of God's good Spirit, all these things are made easy to the understandings, acceptable to the wills, and possible in the practice, to all true believers.

Now this great blessing, of the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, is so far from being given as a reward of any thing we have done, or can do, that it is bestowed upon us before we can do any thing at all; namely, when we are received into covenant with God; for then (that is, at our baptism) we are made 'children of God, a new creation, temples of the Holy Ghost, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven.' And our life after this, be it never so holy, is entirely owing to the constant influence, guidance, and assistance of this blessed Spirit.

And it is for this reason that Christians are so often admonished not to look upon their own works as any thing in God's account meriting our justification; since as God, for Christ's sake, forgives us our sins, so it is the Spirit of God alone which enables us to walk worthy of such a favour all our days; showing our thankfulness for the same, by our obedience, and glorifying God for his mercy to us, by a holy life.

Now, forasmuch as Christians are but too apt to fall into a carnal security, they are to be often called upon to try whether they have the Spirit of God dwelling in them, or whether they have not lost, or are in danger of losing so necessary a guide?

But how must they do this? Why, they must have such marks as cannot possibly deceive any, but such as are willing to be deceived. We do not bid them, for instance, look to their own inward experience, since even good men often lament their want of faith, even when they are supported by it; and many with little reason fancy themselves to have the Spirit of God, when a worse spirit governs them.

We must, therefore, tell Christians, that they have no way so sure of knowing whether they have the Spirit of God, as by considering the fruits the Spirit which possesseth them produced in them; namely, whether their great aims and designs are to be happy in this world, or to please God, and to secure the fellowship of his Holy Spirit unto their lives' end. This, every body is capable of knowing, who will be at the pains of searching the bottom of his own heart. For if he finds that his thoughts are chiefly upon another world, and that this so affects his heart, that his endeavours after holiness are sincere, then he may be well assured all is well with him. He has the word of God for it. 'There is verily now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' 'The same Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, (or conscience,) that we are the sons of God.'[1] That is, if we are led by the Spirit of God to walk worthy of him that hath

[1] Rom. viii. 1, 16.

called us, we may be satisfied in our minds, that we are under God's protection, guidance, and favour.

It now remains, that we consider how we may continue so; that is, how we may secure 'the fellowship of the Holy Ghost,' which we received in baptism, unto our lives' end.

And first, though we owe all the grace which God has given us to his Holy Spirit, and must always depend upon him for the continuance of it, yet we must still exert our best endeavours in the use of those means which God has ordained, in order to fit us for heaven. For certainly men take the most effectual way to deprive themselves of God's assistance, when they neglect to do what is already in their own power, that is, what God has enabled them to do, though it be never so little; for when a man does what he can, it is a sign that he is sincere. And therefore, at the same time that the Scriptures bid us to depend upon God, they exhort us 'to work out our own salvation;'[1] that is, on our part, to do all that God by his preventing grace has convinced us we ought to do, and which by his assisting grace he will enable us to do, if we sincerely ask his help.

And secondly, that we may secure the presence and assistance of God's Spirit, we must be careful to mind his godly motions, exciting us to our duty, checking us when we are doing amiss, and comforting us when we do what pleaseth God. Not to do this is, as the apostle speaks, 'doing despite to the Spirit of grace;'[2] 'resisting the Holy Ghost,'[3] as St. Stephen says the Jews and their fathers had done, which brought destruction upon them.

[1] Phil. ii. 12. [2] Heb. x. 29. [3] Acts, vii. 51.

Lastly, we must above all things be careful not to grieve and provoke him to forsake us, by sensuality, by uncleanness, or by living in any known sin; and even by an undue application to, and an affection for earthly things, which our Lord assures us will choke the word and the Spirit, by which it becomes a means of grace, and it becometh unfruitful.

If to this we add our sincere prayers, out of a true sense of our own inability, and God's readiness to help us through the mediation of Jesus Christ, we shall then be secure of the assistance of God's Holy Spirit, being assured by our Lord himself, that our Heavenly Father 'will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him,'[1] as certainly and readily as any father will give good things to his children that ask him bread, or what is needful for their life and well-being.

And now, good Christians, you see the necessity of Christian baptism, by which we have the Spirit given unto us; without which Spirit it is impossible for any man to work out his salvation. You see the reason why very many, though they have received the earnest of God's Spirit in baptism, are yet as wicked as those that never heard whether there was any Holy Ghost or not. They have neglected his motions; they have grieved him by their evil deeds; they have forced him from them, and are become servants of another master, whose delight is in wickedness. You see therefore the necessity there is of walking warily, lest, by adding one sin to another, we provoke God to leave us to ourselves; for then you have

[1] Luke xi. 13.

heard who it is that immediately takes possession of us.

You see what little use it is to be convinced of the truth of the Christian religion, if we do not seriously apply to the Spirit for grace to live as becomes the gospel of Christ. Lastly, you see the danger of neglecting the means of grace which the providence of God affords us: it is the ready way to be forsaken of God, and left to ourselves.

To conclude. Do we desire the satisfaction of knowing whether we are under the government of the Spirit of God? If so, we are to consider whether we are led by the Spirit of God; that is, whether the fruits and effects of that Holy Spirit appear in our lives and conversations. If, for instance, we love God, and endeavour to please him to the best of our power; if we love our neighbour indeed and in truth; that is, doing good as well as giving good words; if we are just in all our dealings, doing to others as we would be dealt with ourselves; if we deny our own wills, and resolve never to please ourselves by displeasing God; if we are afraid of sin, and keep at a distance from it; if we apply to God in all our necessities, and willingly submit to what his providence shall order for us,—why then we are sure these are the fruits of the Spirit, that he abideth with us, and will be with us, while we continue to walk in this way.

On the other hand:—if a man has cast off the fear of God; runs headlong into temptations; lives in the practice of known sins; is fond of every thing that may divert his thoughts from the care of his soul; why then he may be sure of it, he is led by the devil, and is in the way of perdition.

Let us, therefore, not flatter ourselves in a con-

cern of so great moment. A wicked life is a sure mark that men do not belong to God. The apostle speaks plain to this purpose: 'In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God.'[1]

In one word—If we would secure the friendship and fellowship of the Holy Ghost, we must listen to him, and obey his godly motions; we must keep a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man. We must pray daily for his gracious assistance, and commit ourselves entirely to his guidance and blessing. And that we may not believe every spirit, we must still have an eye to the word of God, established by miracles; by which we shall easily distinguish his will from the suggestions of our own corrupt hearts; we shall see the truth, be governed by it, and shall be secure from fear of evil.

Now unto him who sanctifieth us, and to Jesus who has redeemed us, and to God our Creator, be all honour and glory for ever. Amen.

[1] 1 John, iii. 10.

THE END.

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